This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Russ. Hist. Description 1812

TRAVELS

IN

KAMTCHATKA AND SIBERIA;

WITH A NARRATIVE OF

A RESIDENCE IN CHINA.

BY

PETER DOBELL,

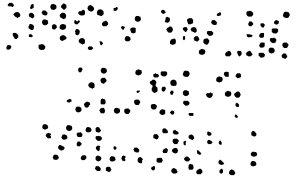
COUNSELLOR OF THE COURT OF HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY
THE EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1830.

J. B. NICHOLS AND SON,
25, PARLIAMENT STREET.



PREFACE.

In offering these Volumes to the public, the Author begs to disavow all pretensions to literary fame. With regard to the first portion of the work, he trusts the public will receive with some share of indulgence his humble attempt to furnish them with genuine information as to the Oriental part of the Empire of Russia, as yet but imperfectly known.

The reader will be surprised to find so many wonderful works of nature there existing, and to learn how rich and interesting a region is Siberia, heretofore only represented to his imagination in the most gloomy and unattractive colours.

In calling to mind the perils and accidents attendant on his route through Siberia, the Author cannot forbear to express those feelings of gratitude with which he reflects on the merciful designs of Providence, through whose interposed protection, himself and four others, who were left by the Tongusees to perish in the wilds of that country, were conducted as safely as unexpectedly to a human habitation.

As to that part of his work which relates to CHINA, the Author, having passed seven or eight years in that country, and having travelled as far as Pekin, may naturally be supposed to have had an opportunity of acquiring a tolerable knowledge of its manners, customs, religion, population, and resources. Lest expectation, however, should exceed performance, it should be recollected, that the timid and jealous character of the Chinese Government presents very great obstacles to inquiry. Europeans, at Macao, as well as at Canton, are strictly watched; and the slightest attempt to extend their acquaintance with the natives, meets with

immediate opposition from the Mandarins. It should likewise be remarked, that the associates of strangers there are generally either shopkeepers or the merchants of the Hong or Chinese Company; none of which classes possess what can be termed a liberal education; for, indeed, if the truth were known, there are probably not many even of the Mandarins who can boast of much general information. To their ignorance we must add (in estimating the difficulties opposed to intelligence) their strong national prejudices, their intolerable venality, and the preposterous belief that China is vastly superior to every other country of the globe—the effect of all which is, that the Chinese cannot express themselves (on the subject of the Celestial Empire) otherwise than in language of the most exaggerated praise.

The Chinese will rarely tell the truth to Europeans, unless when it suits their interests, and it is well known that, throughout Asia, a falsehood well managed is too often considered as a meritorious proof of dexterity.

After these admonitory remarks, however, the Author may be allowed to add, that he has endeavoured, by applying his own observation and experience, to clear his account, as much as possible, from the colouring of fiction, and that he ventures to believe his endeavour has not been unsuccessful.

CONTENTS

OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.—p. 3.

Author's arrival at Kamtchatka—Bay of Avatcha—Port of St. Peter and St. Paul—Frequency of dikes and mounds in Kamtchatka—Author's departure from St. Peter and St. Paul, in company with the Commandant, to visit the Governor, General Petrowsky, at Nijna Kamtchatsk—Route described—Village of Avatcha—Brantzoff, the hospitable old soldier—Voyage in canoes—Starrie-Ostrog—Annoyance from the Mosquitoes—Hospitable treatment at Korakee-Ostrog—River Bistra—Malka—Bears—Fish—Ostrog of Pooschinna—Islands on the river Kamtchatka—Hospitality at the village of Kamtchatka—The modern Merlin—Werkney Kamtchatsk—Singular contrivance of Canoes—Kirganik—Mashura—Construction of ballagans and jourtas—Native fruits—Striking scenery—Klutchee—Majestic volcano of Klootchefsky—Kammina—Arrival at Nijna Kamtchatsk.

CHAPTER II.—p. 47.

Author's reception at Nijna Kamtchatsk—General Petrowsky—Commencement of the return—Some remarks respecting Nijna Kamtchatsk—Tschokee—Kammakee

—Shooting of ducks and geese—Klutchee—State of the people there—Fall of snow—Sherrom and its hospitable Toyune—Industry of his family—Edible roots —Arrival at Malka—Story of a perilous adventure on the ice—Nacheeka—Difficulties of the journey—Horses, dogs, and sledges—Karaikee—Embarkation in canoes on the river Avatcha—Re-arrival at St. Peter and St. Paul's — Observations on the temperature in Kamtchatka—Remarks on the character of the natives.

CHAPTER III.—p. 65.

The Author's second departure from St. Peter and St. Paul—Sledge-travelling—Renewed acquaintance with old Merlin—Climate of Kamtchatka—Tchappinna—Wild fowl and game—Argallis, or mountain sheep—Wild dogs, reindeer, &c. — Causes of depopulation in Kamtchatka — Tolbachik — Oushkee — Trait of simple gratitude — Klutchee — Second meeting with General Petrowsky—Village of Kharchinna — A Kamtchatdale dance — Yalofka — Bear-skins — Case of misfortune— Ozernoy—Singular marriage custom—Remarks on the habits and character of the Kamtchatdales.

CHAPTER IV.—p. 85.

An excursion on snow-shoes—Ouka—Further remarks on the resources of Kamtchatka—Khallule—Mode of constructing Jourtas—Rivers Khallule and Nacheeka —Frozen state of the sea-shore—Ostrog and river of Evashka—The Kamtchatdale climate—Dranka—Karagee Ostrog and River—An invalid—Violent snow-storm —Another kind host—Timlatee.

CHAPTER V.—p. 99.

Journey continued from Timlatee—Another violent snow-storm—Sagacity of the Sledge-dogs—Hospitable shelter—A Toyune's possessions—Killing the fatted buck — National tribute — Keecheekinskoy Ostrog — The Karaikee Prince Zachar's Ostrog of Govinskoy — Visit from an old Chief—Qualities of the Reindeer, for purposes of draught—Mode of taking them—A friend to whiskey—A trait of female character—The Sedatchee Karaikees — Respect shown to the Chiefs — Anecdote displaying the presence of mind of Prince Zachar — Further particulars respecting the Reindeer — Arrival at Vilpareskoy.

CHAPTER VI.—p. 117.

Prince Zachar's advice as to the route—Departure from Vilpareskoy—Veyvinskoy — A snow-storm predicted and experienced—Uncleanly habits of the Karaikees—Singular mode of catching wild ducks—Herds of reindeer—A Tschookchee chief—Veytera—Numerous presents of venison—Remarks on the Karaikees—Crowd of Visitors—Karaikee bread—Karaikee jourtas—Vaytivay—Visit from a Toyune—Difference of character between the Karaikees and the Kamtchatdales—A ride in a reindeer sledge—White partridges—Discomforts arising from wind and snow—Virtues of tea peculiarly felt by the traveller — Course along the Kammina river —Crossing a moor—A Karaikee sorcerer—Dangers of the river Talofka in its frozen state—Arrival at Kammina.

—Shooting of ducks and geese—Klutchee—State of the people there—Fall of snow—Sherrom and its hospitable Toyune—Industry of his family—Edible roots —Arrival at Malka—Story of a perilous adventure on the ice—Nacheeka—Difficulties of the journey—Horses, dogs, and sledges—Karaikee—Embarkation in canoes on the river Avatcha—Re-arrival at St. Peter and St. Paul's — Observations on the temperature in Kamtchatka—Remarks on the character of the natives.

CHAPTER III.—p. 65.

The Author's second departure from St. Peter and St. Paul—Sledge-travelling—Renewed acquaintance with old Merlin—Climate of Kamtchatka—Tchappinna—Wild fowl and game—Argallis, or mountain sheep—Wild dogs, reindeer, &c. — Causes of depopulation in Kamtchatka — Tolbachik — Oushkee — Trait of simple gratitude — Klutchee — Second meeting with General Petrowsky—Village of Kharchinna — A Kamtchatdale dance—Yalofka—Bear-skins—Case of misfortune—Ozernoy—Singular marriage custom—Remarks on the habits and character of the Kamtchatdales.

CHAPTER IV.—p. 85.

An excursion on snow-shoes—Ouka—Further remarks on the resources of Kamtchatka—Khallule—Mode of constructing Jourtas—Rivers Khallule and Nacheeka —Frozen state of the sea-shore—Ostrog and river of Evashka—The Kamtchatdale climate—Dranka—Karagee Ostrog and River—An invalid—Violent snow-storm —Another kind host—Timlatee.

CHAPTER V.—p. 99.

Journey continued from Timlatee—Another violent snow-storm—Sagacity of the Sledge-dogs—Hospitable shelter—A Toyune's possessions—Killing the fatted buck — National tribute — Keecheekinskoy Ostrog — The Karaikee Prince Zachar's Ostrog of Govinskoy — Visit from an old Chief—Qualities of the Reindeer, for purposes of draught—Mode of taking them—A friend to whiskey—A trait of female character—The Sedatchee Karaikees — Respect shown to the Chiefs — Anecdote displaying the presence of mind of Prince Zachar — Further particulars respecting the Reindeer — Arrival at Vilpareskoy.

CHAPTER VI.—p. 117.

Prince Zachar's advice as to the route—Departure from Vilpareskoy—Veyvinskoy — A snow-storm predicted and experienced—Uncleanly habits of the Karaikees—Singular mode of catching wild ducks—Herds of reindeer—A Tschookchee chief—Veytera—Numerous presents of venison—Remarks on the Karaikees—Crowd of Visitors—Karaikee bread—Karaikee jourtas—Vaytivay—Visit from a Toyune—Difference of character between the Karaikees and the Kamtchatdales—A ride in a reindeer sledge—White partridges—Discomforts arising from wind and snow—Virtues of tea peculiarly felt by the traveller — Course along the Kammina river —Crossing a moor—A Karaikee sorcerer—Dangers of the river Talofka in its frozen state—Arrival at Kammina.

CHAPTER VII.—p. 140.

Toyune of Kammina—Precautions necessary against the Inhabitants—The starosta, or head man, of Klutchee, a useful companion on the road—Comparison between the Tchookchees and the Sedatchee Karaikees—A meeting with two Cossacks—Fatigue of the travelling-dogs—Arrival at the ostrog of Parrennia—Imposition practised by the natives—Party of Cossacks—Continued weariness of the dogs—Scantiness of provisions—Canine sagacity—Arrival at Igiga—Its poverty of situation and resources—Poisonous species of whale—Author's excursions around Igiga—Difficulties preceding departure—A wholesale slaughter of reindeer—A Tchookchee conjuror—Remarks on Igiga.

CHAPTER VIII.—p. 160.

Route continued from Igiga—Numerical force of the party—Exchange no robbery—Inflammation of the eyes occasioned to the Author by the reflection of the sun from the snow—Karamandash—Drunken Karaikees—Nyakonna—An adventure there—River Audonee—Warm springs—Voracity of the Cossack guides—Shooting excursion to the sea-coast—Marrow of the reindeer a luxury—Shortness of provisions on the road—Postman conveying the mail—Softness of the snow an impediment to travelling—Crossing a mountain—Travelling virtues of the dogs—Toomannee—Author parts with his Cossack guides—Situation of Toomannee—Its drunken Toyune—A skilful sledge-driver—River Tackyam—Speculation on the migration of wild-fowl—Encounter with a bear—Arrival at Yamsk—Character of the neighbouring inhabitants.

CHAPTER IX.—p. 189.

Situation of Yamsk — Journey continued — Excursion over a mountain—Expeditious descent—Accident occurring to the Author and the driver of his sledge—Peculiar benefit of sleep to the traveller—River Seglan—Passage on the ice to the sea—Prevalence of snow—Village, river, and bay of Aula—Civil host—Prosecution of the journey along the sea-coast — Mode of catching seals practised by the Tongusees—Ostrog of Arman—Lamoots, or Tongusee Reindeer men—Arrival at Towisk—Detention by a snow-storm—Difficulties of the route—Active habits of the Tongusees—A tremendous cliff—Advantage of snow-shoes—Absconding of several of the Author's attendants—Pusillanimity of the Cossack guide—Scantiness of provisions—Author's suspicions as to the Cossack.

CHAPTER X.—p. 224.

Continuation of the journey—Chain of mountains—Debate as to the right direction of the route—New travelling arrangements—Author's exhortations to those with him—Part of the baggage is left behind on a mountain—Perilous descent of the mountain—Fears expressed by the Author's Karaikee attendant—Mutual promises entered into by the party—Stormy weather and scanty food—Night-quarters in a forest—Contrivance for passing a stream—Incipient signs of vegetation—Excessive fatigue endured—A loss on the road—Tea without sugar—Effect of the sun on the snow, increasing the difficulty of progress—Hopes delayed of discovering the sea—Screech-owl soup!—Necessity for personal conveyance of the baggage—Increased fatigue of the travellers—A shooting adventure.

CHAPTER XI.—p. 250.

Prosecution of the journey—Renewed endeavours to discover the Sea—Extensive burning of the Woods and Grass—Persecution by Mosquitoes—Fatigue and hunger—A sporting accident—The party reach a river and construct a raft for its navigation—Fog, wind, and rain—Perilous adventure on the raft—Seasonable acquisition of a Tongusee Canoe—A deserted jourta—Rapidity of the current—Joyful meeting with three natives—Arrival at Grebay—Kindness of an old Yakut woman — Towinsk — Hospitable treatment there — Amokthon—Author parts with his Karaikee guide—Encampment of the party by the river Mettaclay—Recovery of the baggage—Messengers from the Governor of Ochotsk—Remarks on the providential escape of the party during their past route — Inskay mountain—Kindness of the Russian peasants—Inia—Effects of cold on the human faculties—Communication from Captain Minitsky—Arrival at Ochotsk.

CHAPTER XII.—p. 295.

Kind attentions experienced by the Author at Ochotsk—Description of that place—Magazines of warlike stores —Admiralty—Flour magazines—Remarks on the situation of Ochotsk—Preparations for prosecuting the journey to Yakutsk—The Author quits Ochotsk—Medvazia Golova—Appearance of the Country—Maitah—An accomplished resident there—Travelling method of making butter—Koneskoy mountains—River Ourak—The Yakut taste in horse flesh—Costume of the Yakuts and Tongusees — Ourasky mountains—Striking

character of the scenery—Difficulties of the road—Yakut superstition—A begging party—Udomskoy Krest—Reflections on the means of water communication in Siberia—Remarks on the resources of the country.

CHAPTER XIII.—p. 318.

Course of the party along the river Okkatchan—Okkatchanskoy mountains—The Kaiyan lakes—Gnats and Mosquitoes—Horse-flesh a Yakut delicacy—A remarkable mountain—Ice in summer—A sublime scene—Mootins Krest—Somniferous cataracts—Post-station of Allachkune—Lofty mountains—Their effect on the beholder—Bad travelling—The white River—A visit from the wolves—Danger from shaking bogs—River Aldan—Colony of exiles—Reflections on the custom and policy of banishment to Siberia—General character of Siberian scenery—Conjuror's lake—Mindiginskoy mountain—River Amga—Mildagaia—Visit by invitation to a Yakut jourta—Lake Cherropchee—Native method of mowing grass—Yakut fisheries—A canoe of peculiar lightness—Lake and station of Borrodoy and of Tchatcheekni—Encampment of soldiers—Passing of various lakes and stations—Good qualities of the horses—Village of Yarmanka—Arrival at Yakutsk.

TRAVELS

IN

KAMTCHATKA

AND

SIBERIA.

TRAVELS IN KAMTCHATKA, &c.

CHAPTER I.

Author's arrival at Kamtchatka—Bay of Avatcha—Port of St. Peter and St. Paul—Frequency of dikes and mounds in Kamtchatka — Author's departure from St. Peter and St. Paul, in company with the Commandant, to visit the Governor, General Petrowsky, at Nijna Kamtchatsk—Route described—Village of Avatcha—Brantzoff, the hospitable old soldier—Voyage in canoe —Starrie-Ostrog—Annoyance from the Mosquitoes—Hospitable treatment at Korakee-Ostrog—River Bistra — Malka — Bears — Fish — Ostrog of Pooschinna — Islands on the river Kamtchatka—Hospitality at the village of Kamtchatka—The modern Merlin—Werkney Kamtchatsk—Singular contrivance of Canoes—Kirganik—Mashura—Construction of ballagans and jourtas —Native fruits—Striking scenery—Klutchee—Majestic volcano of Klootchefsky—Kammina—Arrival at Nijna Kamtchatsk.

It was on a fine moon-light night of the 21st of August, 1812, that I first made the land of Kamtchatka, a little to the westward of Chipoonsky Noss. We ran into what appeared a

large bay, and anchored with our small bower-anchor in eight fathoms water.

When daylight enabled us to see exactly where we were, we found ourselves in a fine deep cove, opposite a sandy beach, at the eastern part of which is a lake of about two or three miles in length, called in Russian *Bolshoy-Ozera.* This lake has an inlet from the sea, and in summer abounds with fish of the salmon species. We saw several large bears on the borders of the lake; but it was impossible to land, on account of a heavy surf beating violently on the shore.

The wind continued to blow directly into the cove for two days in succession, but so light withal, as to baffle every attempt we made to beat out again. I therefore ordered a kedge to be laid out to windward, and warped out, when, a fair breeze springing up, we directed our course towards the bay of Avatcha, only a few miles to the westward. Previously to warping off, I sounded over the cove, in my boat, and found the soundings gradually decrease from eight fathoms and a half to two and a half close in with the surf, and the holding ground not good, being principally gravel, sand, and mud mixed.

Whilst there, we caught several very fine cod-fish and flounders; and again, whilst becalmed for a short time at the mouth of Avatcha Bay, the crew literally covered the decks with them.

Owing to light airs and calm weather, we did not get into the Port of St. Peter and St. Paul until the 25th. The bay of Avatcha is forty versts in circumference, encompassed by forest-covered mountains, and large tracts of low lands. In this bay the united fleets of Europe might ride in perfect safety, the holding ground being so tenacious that it is oftentimes difficult to weigh an anchor. On the whole it affords a combination of picturesque beauty, grandeur, and security rarely equalled in other parts of the globe. Within the large bay are five other bays, namely, Solovarny, Rakovy, St. Peter and St. Paul's, Ceroglasky, and Tarinsky. The first two are small and unsafe, being much exposed to the north-west and south-east winds. St. Peter and St. Paul is well known for its sure and safe moorings. Rakovy and Tarinsky are both large and safe bays, particularly the latter, which has fine deep water, and is from ten to twelve miles in circumference. Two rivers, the Paratoonka and the Avatcha, empty themselves into the great bay of Avatcha, and both of

them abound with fish in the season, generally of the salmon and trout species. Avatcha river has upwards of one hundred mouths; and these, together with several salt water inlets from the bay, intersect an immense tract of low grounds, which, in former times, have been banked to prevent them from being overflowed.

The dikes and mounds are very numerous, not only here, but also in many other parts of Kamtchatka; a circumstance proving strongly that the country has once been thickly peopled. Some persons endeavoured so persuade me those mounds were natural,* and caused by the river often changing its course; but it is impossible to see them and not feel convinced that they are the work of art, and cost a good deal of labour. Evident marks remain where the earth has been dug out and thrown up; the holes which were very deep are now ponds, whilst the shallower ones have been filled up with soft mud, and have a thick surface of turf upon them, resembling what is called a shaking bog. There is no doubt of their being the work of man; but when and how it was performed is

* As I afterwards lived five years at Avatcha, the reader will naturally conclude I had a good opportunity of examining them, to confirm my opinion.

what I could not discover. The Kamtchatdales themselves could have had no inducement to undertake such a laborious task; as when they were first known, they had neither horned cattle nor horses. They were probably made after the conquest of that country by the Russians, when domestic animals were introduced; as they are evidently intended to preserve the low lands for hay and pasture. This has been so well accomplished, that the greater part of them are actually in perfect good order.

On my arrival at St. Peter and St. Paul, I found there the colonel, who was second in command under General Petrowsky (the actual Governor), with whom I immediately made arrangements that we should go together to Nijna Kamtchatsk, seven hundred and fifty versts distant, to see the general, — the colonel not being authorised to enter into my views without his permission. We fixed on the 1st of September for our departure; and, in the mean time, I dined with the commandant, and gave him a dinner in return, as well as a ball to the whole town. I cleared the quarter-deck of my vessel for this purpose, where I collected the young and old to the number of forty, and with two bad fiddles, and some stentorian soldiers'

voices, and plenty of wine and aniseed cordial, we contrived to keep the party dancing until three in the morning.

Being provided with a good stock of powder and ball and two guns, we set off on the 1st of September, in our ship's boat, for the little village of Avatcha, twelve versts from St. Peter and St. Paul's, where we were to procure canoes to ascend against the stream of the river.

Avatcha is situated at the very bottom of the bay of the same name, which we crossed whilst the weather was serene and mild as possible. A perfect calm prevailed, that was only interrupted by immense flocks of water-fowl and seals, which sported about us; the latter often pushing their heads above water quite near to the boat, with great seeming curiosity. Many of the superb rampart of mountains that surround this bay are extinct volcanoes, of a conical form, rising majestically to the clouds; whilst the foreground is composed of hills well covered with wood; forming altogether a very interesting picture.

On arriving at Avatcha we dined at the house of a hospitable old invalid soldier, named Brantzoff, who, as he had known Captains Clarke, Perouse, and in fact every stranger who

had ever visited the peninsula, would not permit us to pass without breaking bread with him. He was a pensioner, and then about eighty years of age, yet was so hale and hearty that he always brought his monthly allowance of flour, about sixty-three English pounds, on his shoulders twelve versts from the port to his village! His wife treated us with fine fish, roast ducks, berries, milk and butter, served up very neat and clean—a circumstance that added much to the pleasure and zest of the entertainment.

Leaving these kind people, we embarked on two small canoes; our servants in one, and the colonel and myself in the other. Each canoe had two Kamtchatdales with long poles to pole them against the current of the river Avatcha, which we were obliged to ascend in this manner for about twenty versts, until we should come to a place called Starrie-Ostrog, where horses were prepared for us to continue our journey. We found the current for the first part quite slow; but towards evening it became very rapid; and I was pleased to see the indefatigable exertions, as well as the skill, with which the Kamtchatdales urged our canoes against the swiftest parts of the stream, and through the

most difficult passages. Our progress now became much impeded by the shallows and a very rapid current; I therefore amused myself occasionally with shooting shelldrakes, and a large species of diver, called gagara, which abounds on this river.

The banks of the Avatcha are, for the most part, composed of fine meadow lands or hills, thickly covered with birch. Indeed at Avatcha village, and on the banks of this stream, any quantity of horned cattle might be fed; but owing to the want of population all those advantages are neglected. The grass in Kamtchatka grows commonly to the height of a horse's belly; that is to say, the best sort; but that which is found on the declivities of hills, about swamps and in moist ground, grows breast-high. It is however coarse and only eaten by the cattle, whilst young.

As we left the village of Avatcha very late in the afternoon, and night was approaching, our Kamtchatdales ran the canoes ashore on the point of a small sand-island that was in the middle of the river. It was almost wholly covered with an immense pile of old trees and drift-wood (heaped upon it by the strength of the current), the greater part of which, being per-

fectly dry, afforded us fine fuel to boil our tea-kettle. We made a good fire, and a refreshing cup of tea, which, together with a cold fish pie and some biscuit, proved as good a supper as a traveller could wish for in such a situation. After supper we retired to our canoes, where, covered well with furs, we slept soundly until daylight the next morning. Although there was no frost, yet the dew was heavy and chill, and we found the bears' skins and parkas,* not only very comfortable, but very necessary.

On the 2nd of September we rose early, and continued our journey; but we found the river not only very rapid, but also shallow and troublesome; so that we were not a little pleased to arrive at about seven o'clock where our horses awaited us, and we could prepare our breakfast. We sent one of our men to a small creek a few hundred yards above us, to catch fish for our breakfast; and he very soon returned with two fine salmon he had speared. These, with bread and butter and tea, helped to assuage our appetites, which the morning air had rendered very

* Parka is a sort of loose shirt made of the reindeer's skin, with the fur inside; there are double ones with the fur within and without, which are then called Kokehankas.

sharp. Our fare, indeed, was exquisite, and our repast would have been delightful in every way, had it not been disturbed by the mosquitoes which swarmed around; so that we were obliged to keep up a thick smoke, and sit in it, to preserve ourselves from their stings. Notwithstanding this precaution we suffered much from them; our ears and faces were swollen with their bites. Knowing that we should have some thick forests to pass through, well stocked with these *flying leeches* (for the Siberian mosquito well deserves this name), we tied handkerchiefs over our ears and cheeks, and, armed with a birch branch to brush them away, we contrived, thus prepared, to pursue our journey through myriads of them without much molestation.

We passed two or three very steep mountains, at one of which we were obliged to dismount and lead our horses, it being impossible to ascend or descend on horseback. In a forest, a few versts from Karakee Ostrog, whither we were going, we met the wife of the Toyune, and another woman, gathering whortle berries: and the moment they saw there was a stranger arrived, they presented to me a birch-bark vessel full of them, and would not receive any thing in payment.

Between twelve and one o'clock we arrived

at the Ostrog, forty-four versts from St. Peter and St. Paul's, and, although so early in the day, the fatigue we had experienced made us all feel quite ready for dinner. In the course of half an hour the Toyune's wife, who had returned by a short path through the woods, had every thing very comfortably prepared; and after first treating us with tea (the custom of the country), she spread before us a table well covered with salmon, salmon peal, wild ducks, berries, &c. For this kind entertainment we left with our host on departing, a small tea-cup of tea, and a few lumps of sugar, and received as many thanks as if we had paid him in gold.

After bidding farewell to these good people, we continued our journey, and arrived at Nacheeka, forty versts off, on the evening of the 2nd of September, so late that we determined to pass the night there. The house, or rather hut, was very black, smoky, and dirty; but as the inhabitants were, as usual, kind and hospitable beyond measure, although they were very poor, I conquered my dislike to the appearance of the hut, and made up my mind to sleep there. The fare we had at supper certainly did not correspond with the table on which it was served; for I never tasted finer trout or better game in

any part of the world than those which were presented to us. It was a repast not always met with by travellers, and one that epicures might have deigned to participate in. Supper being ended, and feeling now well disposed to sleep, I ordered two large stools to be placed against the wooden wall, that was composed of large logs, and my bed was spread upon them. The colonel, however, told me I was wrong, and that I had better partake of his tent, as the houses in Kamtchatka were oftentimes well stocked with bugs and fleas; but, as my bed was now already prepared, I did not like to wait to have it removed, especially as I conceived a hut that had been so well smoked every day, could not possibly afford a habitation for vermin. I had not slept two hours, before I was convinced to the contrary, and heartily cursed my stars for not having accepted at first of the colonel's invitation. A swarm of bugs and fleas roused me from a heavy sleep, before midnight, and I found them, as well as a quantity of small cockroaches, crawling all over me. I struck a light as quickly as possible, when I was truly astonished to see what an immense quantity of those vermin a new comer's blood had attracted. I was obliged to change all my linen, and it occu-

pied an hour at least before we got the bed and coverlid completely free from them, by beating and shaking them in the open air. My body was covered with large red blotches; and I was obliged to wash myself with brandy, to calm the irritation occasioned by the bites; yet the Kamtchatdales assured me they slept there every night, and never felt the smallest inconvenience! It cannot be that they were callous to the attacks of those insects—I rather suppose, that the bugs and fleas do not bite them. I was glad to pass the remainder of the night in the colonel's tent; and, indeed, every other night during our journey, when the quarters were suspicious, — as those of Nacheeka left a painful *souvenir* that lasted several days.

After breakfast the next morning we pushed forward for an Ostrog called Malka, thirty-six versts off; but did not arrive there until four o'clock P. M. The weather was misty, with a small drizzling rain; the fog, however, was not so thick as to hide the many romantic and beautiful views on the river Bistra, which often presented themselves between those two Ostrogs. At Malka we found, as usual, a hospitable Toyune and his wife — a flourishing Ostrog, — and the house of the Toyune more spacious than any we

had yet seen, and tolerably clean: but the cock-roaches were so numerous, they got into the milk, and indeed garnished every dish that was put on the table. They are certainly most disgusting insects; but fatigue and hunger got the better of our nicer organs, and we made a hearty dinner. We had fish and game as usual, but to them were added a very fine piece of mountain mutton, that is much higher-flavoured and infinitely more delicate than venison. The argallis, or mountain sheep of Kamtchatka, abound in the neighbourhood of Malka and Ganal.

After a comfortable night's rest, and being overpowered with hospitality, we pursued our road towards Ganal the next morning. Our way was through a wild but beautiful country, intersected with streams and adorned with fine forests of birch. We also saw a good deal of low and meadow ground, where any quantity of cattle might be nourished. Two bears crossed the road, but at too great a distance for us to fire at them. The day was beautifully clear, and so warm that we were all quite in a perspiration, and at length were obliged to rest ourselves and our horses under the shade of some fine trees. We then trotted briskly on

again, and arrived at Ganal by four o'clock in the afternoon. As we crossed a shallow branch of the river, just before we came to the Toyune's house, the salmon were so thick that we almost frightened them out of the water as our horses forded it; yet, on arriving, we could get no fresh fish until we sent to spear them. The Toyune confessed that he had not caught any for three or four days, and was living on those he had split and hung to dry.

While dinner was preparing, I took a canoe and a couple of Kamtchatdales to pole it, and set out on a little excursion down the river to shoot bears. However, we were unfortunate, and saw none but a dead one, that, I presume, had been wounded, and drowned in attempting to cross the river. The Kamtchatdales said they would come the next day for his skin, which was very fine. We found it difficult to ascend the river against the current; and a heavy shower of rain came on, that wet me completely to the skin, before we could get back again.

I was truly surprised at the immense quantities of fish I saw; not only the river was crowded with live ones, but the shores were strewed with dead or half-dead salmon; and

in many places the smell from them was very offensive.

We had ordered fish for dinner; yet, when the dinner was served, we were obliged to ask for it, our host thinking it quite too common to offer to his guest. Although he had been living himself on dried fish, yet his table for us was covered with game, serannas,* and berries. A Kamtchatdale, however poor he may be, conceives it a duty to preserve a certain portion of his chase for travellers. After feasting upon this poor fellow's good cheer, we retired early to rest, having the next day twenty-seven versts to ride from Ganal to Pooschinna.

On the 4th, by seven o'clock, we were all on horseback. Our guard was an old cossack who lived several years at Ganal. He told us the bears were numerous, and made his Kamtchatdales and myself prepare our rifles. Mine I slung after the custom of the country to my shoulder; and, thus armed, we set off for the place of our destination. Before we had accomplished twelve or fifteen versts, we saw several large bears, but, the wind blowing from us to them, they took the scent, and went off so

* Lilium pomponium.

fast, we could not get a shot at them. At length I perceived one feeding on berries in a meadow not far from the road; and by walking round to leeward of him, and wading a small creek, I got within fifty or sixty yards of him before he smelt me. He raised himself on his hind legs to look around him, when I succeeded in planting a bullet in his side, that penetrated his lungs and laid him dead on the spot. He proved to be a fine full-grown bear, very fat. The Kamtchatdales promised to strip off his skin and preserve it for me; but in the meanwhile they went through their usual ceremony, namely, first to stick a sharp knife into each eye and then to rip up the belly. This they said was absolutely necessary, as bears sometimes have been known to recover, even after several severe wounds, and kill the persons who had cut open their bellies with an intention of skinning them; "Whereas," said they, "if their eyes had first been put out, they could not have seen any thing, and those persons would have escaped." On examining him, we were greatly surprised to find his intestines filled with worms from four to six inches in length; and it seemed incredible that he could exist with such a stock of them. However, the Kamtchatdales assured us this was

very common during the summer, when berries were in plenty, and that they had seen several bears in the same way.

During the height of the fishing season the salmon are so plentiful in all the rivers and creeks of Kamtchatka, that the bears catch them with the greatest ease, and will then only eat of the heads and backs. The Kamtchatdales say that a large bear will spoil from twenty-five to thirty fish of a night. As the season advances, and the fish get scarcer, the bears become less choice in their food; and those which are fat prepare their dens towards the latter end of September, and retire after the first snow in October, for the winter. The poor ones, on the contrary, continue roaming about until very late in the autumn, and even sometimes make excursions during the winter. These are generally very ferocious, in consequence of their lean and hungry state, and the natives are by no means fond of attacking them, as their skins are bad, and there is nothing to compensate for the danger of hunting them.

As we had yet a considerable distance to perform before night, we hurried off again, as soon as possible; but towards evening our horses became quite tired, and moved on very slowly. The night overtook us; a heavy dew fell; and

as we were thinly clad, we were almost benumbed with the cold. It was ten at night ere we got to Pooschinna, and the most tedious ten minutes I ever passed in my life were those spent at the Toyune's door, knocking, and endeavouring to rouse the people within, who seemed to sleep uncommonly hard. By dint of loud thundering we at length gained admittance. It was half an hour before the kettle was ready, and full an hour was spent in preparing the supper; but our host was kind and hospitable, and amply repaid us for the delay by a good supper of fish, game, berries, seranas, milk, and cream. As this Toyune had a large family of children, and only one cow, I was at a loss to imagine how his wife could have been able to prepare sour milk, curds, and cream, to regale travellers. The hut was a wretched one, low and smoky; yet the table was scoured clean and white, and every thing was served up in a cleanly manner, and the food well dressed. We could not, however, attempt to stand up whilst the stove was heating, as a thick cloud of smoke enveloped the ceiling, which was very low, and had a small square hole in it instead of a chimney. The surplus smoke found its way out by the door, but so slowly that

we were constantly obliged to remain on our seats, to keep our heads below the suffocating atmosphere that prevailed above.

A sound sleep after such good cheer refreshed us exceedingly; and on the morning of the 5th of September, after breakfast, we continued our journey. I was not in the least displeased to find nearly half the distance to the next station was to be performed in canoes. We embarked on the river Kamtchatka, here a narrow, rapid, winding stream, divided into numerous branches, forming islands covered with trees, and rendering the scene all the way picturesque and beautiful. The fish, as usual, were seen in myriads sporting about, whilst the shores presented a qnantity of dead ones thrown up by the current. It began to rain, and I got all my guns wet, so that although we saw eight bears, during our journey on the river, I could not shoot at them. The rain poured down in torrents, and soon wet us through our clothes; and we were trembling with cold by the time we made half the distance to Sherrom, where our horses awaited us. We were, therefore, not a little delighted to mount them, that the exercise of riding might keep us a little warm; but, fortunately, in the course of half an hour the rain ceased, and the weather

becoming mild and serene, the sun shone forth with redoubled lustre, and proved highly acceptable.

On our way we saw several dogs, which I thought at first were wolves, but I was told that in summer many Kamtchatdales turn their dogs out to provide for themselves, which is not difficult, since fish is their food. The reader may form some idea of the quantity of fish in Kamtchatka, when I tell him that men, dogs, bears, wolves, foxes, sables, birds of prey, &c. all live upon fish. Yet, notwithstanding this, innumerable quantities of them run into shallow places and die; whilst others, becoming too weak to stem the current, are thrown on shore, and there rot, being afterwards eaten either by the birds or beasts.

We now passed through several fine forests of birch; and on the banks of the stream I observed alders, poplars, and willows. As we drew near to Sherrom we saw a large extent of low meadows, intersected by the several branches of the river Kamtchatka; these branches form islands occasionally, some of which were covered with trees, and particularly the balsam poplar, of a very large size.

The valley of Sherrom now opened to our

view, surrounded by a rampart of mountains, enriched with a luxurious vegetation, — in the centre of which, and near one of the branches of Kamtchatka river, is a village of the same name. Nature seemed to have dressed in her best attire this interesting spot, which, under a serene sky, and a warm glowing sunshine, could not fail to inspire us with the most pleasing sensations. These were, perhaps, heightened, (as it was then about dinner-time,) when the colonel pointed out a cottage to us that he said was the habitation of the Toyune, the outward appearance of which was too engaging not to excite anticipations of good cheer within.

As it was a low building, I put my head into one of the windows that was open, and was quite surprised to see so neat and clean a dwelling in that country. The name of the owner, who was Toyune of Sherrom, was Conon Merlin. He and his wife were absent, fishing; but we were not the less hospitably received by his daughter and daughter-in-law, two clean-dressed pretty young women, who welcomed us with their smiles, and made us imagine that, instead of Kamtchatka, we had got into the land of enchantment. Every thing about them seemed in unison with their appearance. The tables and

stools were of poplar, scoured white as snow; not a cock-roach, nor any other vermin, to be seen on the walls, which were hewed smooth, and whitened; and the whole presented a picture of neatness, cleanliness, and comfort, such as we had not yet seen in Kamtchatka.

In fifteen minutes after our arrival, a refreshing cup of tea was prepared, with fresh butter, cream, and milk; and the being served up in so neat a manner made them taste more delicious than usual. Our hostess being a well-behaved young woman, we requested her to do the honors of the table, which she performed with the utmost cheerfulness and politeness, just as if she had been bred in a city.

In the evening, the old Toyune and his wife returned from fishing, and seemed quite overjoyed to see us, as such guests, they said, were not common; and they certainly took uncommon pains to treat and to please us. The old man appeared between 60 and 70 years of age, with a long white beard and mustachios, which, added to a mild, sensible, and prepossessing countenance, gave him a most sage and respectable appearance, and personified to my imagination the wise enchanter whose name he bore.

Merlin had been educated by the famous Mr.

were hurried by the current with the rapidity of lightning, while at others we glided smoothly and silently along through various winding branches, islands, forests, mountains, and meadows, in endless variety, delighting the eye at every instant. The banks of the main stream seemed principally composed of rich native pasture-ground, well adapted to the support of numerous flocks and herds. We saw again several bears, but the rain fell in such quantities it was impossible to shoot at them.

On our arrival at Werkney Kamtchatsk, we were well accommodated at the house of a Russian under-officer, who was a pensioner, and whose wife and himself were very hospitable. But, although they were kind, and the house tolerably clean, the contrast between them and the good people of Sherrom was very striking.

As the rain continued, and the colonel had some business to settle, we remained here until the morning of the 8th of September. We did not get off before 10 o'clock, which, however, was not of much consequence, as we had only a few versts to perform on horseback to a place called Shegatchick, and to Milkova; and from the latter we were to continue our journey on the river Kamtchatka, in double canoes.

Shegatchick was at that time a small village, occupied by a few soldiers and their families, who had the care of the cattle belonging to government. Here we procured a good stock of cream, milk, and butter for the road, put up in birch-bark vessels, called in Kamtchatka *toois*, but in Russian *bourak*. The bark is often stamped with flowers and figures inlaid with talc, that gives them a pretty appearance. They have a cover that fits in tightly, and through it there is a handle by which they are carried; so that liquids, or whatever you please to put into them, may be transported, even on horseback, with the greatest safety.

After looking at the cattle, and examining the rye that had not been long cut, and which was very fine, we continued our journey a few versts farther on to Milkova.

Milkova is also a Russian village, composed principally of peasants; and we got a hospitable reception and a good dinner in the house of the staroста, or head man. Here also some specimens were shown us of excellent rye and barley; but there appeared a want of energy amongst the inhabitants; nor did they look as healthy as those of Werkney and Shegatchick. During our dinner, four canoes had been prepared to

convey us down the river, together with our servants and baggage. Two canoes were first fastened together by sticks laid across them, and secured with ropes, which went under the bottoms. Upon those sticks was laid a platform of boards, which were also secured by ropes. On this platform we found ourselves quite at our ease, and could stand up or sit down when we pleased, without the fear of upsetting. Before, when in the small single canoes, it required the greatest precaution when you wished to move, to do it without destroying the equilibrium of those tottering and dangerous vessels. I must, however, declare that the Kamtchatdales are extremely clever and expert in the management of them, and preventing accidents. There is generally a Kamtchatdale at each end to pole or paddle them, who contrive to counterbalance any extraordinary motion of the passengers, and keep the canoe upright. I often rose, fired my fowling-piece, and loaded again, without accident; and I found the Kamtchatdales counteracted all my motions in the most expert manner, and kept the canoe steady.

It was about two in the afternoon when we set off on our double canoes; the weather being clear and warm; and the Russian peasants, whom we

treated with a glass of watky,* paddled us along with great rapidity; for the stream itself was pretty rapid. The banks of the river were either lined with fine forests of timber, or extensive meadow-lands. Myriads of fish again sported against the current, and large flocks of teal, ducks, and geese, hovered about us on all sides, or floated upon the surface of the river. I killed several, though I only fired occasionally, as it retarded our progress to stop and pick up the game, besides making an overstock in our provisions.

By half-past four in the afternoon we got to Kirganick, thirty-four versts, where we were detained until half-past five, in consequence of the Toyune being absent with his men fishing. His wife entertained us with tea, milk, and butter (the tea from our own stock); and had, if not the cleanest, the largest house we had seen in Kamtchatka. There were more cattle and horses at this Ostrog than at any other Kamtchatdale village we saw, except Malka; and the Toyunsha seemed an industrious clever woman.

Our boats being ready, we again glided swiftly down the stream, and reached the ballagans of

* Whisky made from rye.

Mashura about eight o'clock in the evening. The village of Mashura is at some distance from the river; the natives consequently pass the summer and autumn at the ballagans for the convenience of catching and drying their fish. Here we stopped for the night, and found plenty of fine fresh salmon, which, with our tea, milk, butter, and berries, composed our supper.

The afternoon had been very calm, and as the gnats and mosquitoes pestered us not a little whilst we were on the water, we concluded we should pass an uncomfortable night. We were however most agreeably disappointed, the night proving cool, and our lodgings being so very high from the ground, that none of them came near us. The only inconvenience we suffered was the smell from a heap of newly dried fish that was deposited in one corner of the apartment.

A ballagan is a building of a conical form, composed of poles about fourteen to fifteen feet long, laid up from the edge of a circle about ten to twelve feet in diameter, the tops all meeting at the centre, and then tied with ozier twigs or ropes. The outside of the poles is then covered with bark of the pine, birch, &c. and oftentimes coarse grass upon the bark. Other poles are afterwards laid upon the bark, and grass to

keep it in its place; and are also fastened with oziers. This kind of hut is generally erected on the centre of a square platform, elevated ten to twelve feet, upon large posts planted deep in the ground. Poles are again placed in rows under the building and between the posts, where they dry their fish, which the hut serves to cover from the weather, as well as to store and preserve them after they are dried. The door of the hut is always opposite to the water; the fire-place on a bed of earth outside, at one corner of the platform. A large piece of timber, with notches cut in it instead of steps, and placed against the platform at an angle of forty-five degrees, is the method of ascending and descending, particularly unsafe and inconvenient for those who are not accustomed to this sort of uncouth ladder. Formerly a ballagan was the summer residence of the Kamtchatdales; and the winter one was what is called a jourta (such as are now used by the Korakees), quite a subterraneous dwelling, which the reader will find described hereafter.

On the 9th we departed at day-light. A thick fog covered the bed of the river, but dispersed gradually as the sun rose, and left us a beautiful day, serene and warm. Not long

after, we landed near a high bank, where there was a heap of dry wood, to boil our kettle and prepare a breakfast.

Whilst this was going on, I took my gun and climbed the bank to examine the country about us,—when there appeared a strong black soil, that only awaited the industrious efforts of man. After climbing the bank, I found myself in a large forest of poplars, aspins, birch, spruce-pines, and alders, many of them trees of a very fine growth. Amongst the underwood I perceived some bushes full of large red berries, which, to my great astonishment, I found to be red currants of a very large size and high flavour, but possessing a much keener acid than those of our gardens. No doubt they would be greatly improved by being transplanted and cultivated. There are several sorts of very good berries in Kamtchatka, such as the raspberry, red currants, whortleberry of two or three sorts, moroshkas, cranberries, and the most delicate of all, the knejnika, a species of wild strawberry, possessing a very high aromatic flavour. The berries of the mountain-ash, called in Russian rebina, are better in Kamtchatka than in Siberia or Russia; as is also a small wild cherry, called cheroonka. I ought to have mentioned

also, the heath-berry, and a red berry that grows on a very small shrub, called in Russian broosnika, which are there in great plenty. The cranberries are likewise very plentiful, and certainly the largest and finest I ever tasted. However there are none of these berries sweet enough to be eaten without sugar; though the natives certainly make use of them in their natural state, and think them very sweet.

Breakfast being soon finished, we committed ourselves again to the stream of Kamtchatka river, which now had become much less rapid than before; but nevertheless hurried us on, with the assistance of the paddles, towards the accomplishment of our journey. Sometimes the banks of the river rose in fine bold prominences, covered with forests; at other times they exhibited large bodies of low grounds, lakes, &c.

At one spot the scene was particularly grand and striking, where the whole body of the river rushes with great impetuosity against the side of a steep mountain, part of which it has carried away, leaving an island in the centre of the stream, and forming a concave excavation in the mountain of two thirds of a circle, about a mile in circumference. This mountain is crowned with spruce and pine trees, and being

very steep, the earth often gives way, and the trees tumble headlong into the river. Some again are seen only half way down, as if endeavouring to take root there; whilst others, impending over the precipice, seem hanging in air, and ready to fall upon the heads of those who pass beneath them. The Kamtchatdales however kept at a respectable distance from the mountain, assuring me that it was dangerous to approach nearer, as the concussion of the water, by a boat passing near, occasioned quantities of earth to fall into the stream, repelling the water suddenly from the shore in large waves which would immediately overset a canoe. On the sand-bank or island that divides the stream is an immense pile of trees and drift-wood, thrown upon it by the force of the current.

It was night when we got sixty-six versts farther on, to the ballagans of Tschappina, where we were entertained and lodged in the same manner as on the night before. We might have gone twenty versts farther; but the colonel, who knew the river, said it was dangerous of a dark night, there being many large trees on the way, whose branches were fastened in the mud at the bottom of the river, and the roots floating to the surface were so violently agitated by the

current, that a canoe struck by one of them is instantly beaten to pieces. We therefore passed the night in one of the ballagans, and pursued our journey again at day-light.

The country we passed through was as wild as possible, but beautifully romantic; and it being fine clear weather, and the sun warm, we made a very pleasant journey fifty-seven versts to the ballagans of Tolbachick. Here we took an early meal, and then continued on until ten o'clock at night, when we stopped to sup, and slept in a bush-house that our Kamtchatdales quickly prepared for us. I remarked, as we passed down the river, several uncommonly fine forests of spruce of large size.

We took an early breakfast on the 11th, and started again; and after descending a few versts, we fell in with a party of Kamtchatdales fishing, who gave us a fresh supply of very fine salmon. These people belonged to the next ostrog or village, called Kogorefsky, where we arrived shortly afterwards. Here we dined on our fresh salmon, and after dinner* paddled on until

* We had a dish of salmon roasted after the Kamtchatdale manner. The salmon was tied to some small sticks, which were also tied to a large one, and stuck before a good fire. Fish roasted in this way are excellent and very juicy.

night, when it began to blow hard, and to rain. Fortunately we stopped near the old frame of a ballagan, the weather side of which we covered with bushes, and, making a large fire in the centre, prepared our supper, and passed the night dry and comfortably, although it rained hard the whole time.

Daylight of the 12th brought with it fine, clear, and cold weather, with a north-west wind, that made us dress ourselves more warmly, and sharpened our appetites. We therefore breakfasted before our departure, and then pushed on briskly. Here the current was more rapid than for the last two days.

We passed two stations, or ostrogs, called Oushkee and Krestee, and arrived at Klutchee, eighty versts off, by nine o'clock at night, having changed our canoes and men twice during the day, at the above-mentioned places. The night was dark, damp, and chill, and we were happy to hurry into a warm comfortable house belonging to the head man or starosta of the village, which was inhabited by Russian peasants.

Formerly a considerable quantity of rye, barley, and potatoes, was cultivated by the peasants of Klutchee, but latterly every thing has been neglected for fishing and the chase;

and these people are actually no better off than the Kamtchatdales. Our host was as usual extremely kind and hospitable, and dealt out with a liberal hand the best his house could afford.

On the morning of the 13th we again took an early breakfast, and departed. As we had arrived long after night had commenced, of course I saw nothing of the surrounding scenery; which, as we pushed off from the shore, now burst suddenly upon my senses in all its beauty and grandeur. The village, of fifteen to twenty houses and a church, stands upon a high bank of the Kamtchatka, that here divides into two branches, one of them impeded by rocks over which the current rushes with violence: on one side of the village, a winding and romantic little river, called Klutchee, joins the Kamtchatka; and the opposite bank of the Kamtchatka is a steep mountain covered with fine forests.

At the back of the village rises the majestic volcano Klootchefsky, rearing his awful and flaming head a considerable distance above the clouds. This huge mountain, towering to the skies, is a perfect cone, decreasing gradually from its enormous base to the summit. Klootchefsky may perhaps be inferior to Etna in size,

DESCRIPTION OF THE VOLCANO OF KLUTCHEE, IN KAMTCHATKA.

High o'er Kamtchatsk,* amidst the skies,
See Klutchee's flaming summit rise!
Its awful grandeur soars above,
Just like the seat of mighty Jove,
From whence his forked bolts are hurl'd,
Destructive on the nether world!
Eternal snow his crater shrouds,
Whilst far beneath, a zone of clouds
Encircles wide his conic form,
Where beats the raging northern storm,
And dread-inspiring thunders roll
Hoarse murmurs to the distant pole.
But when the wintry storms, amain,
With fleecy pinions scour the plain,
And o'er his lofty surface steep,
And stately forests, wildly sweep;
His hoary sides aloud resound,
Spreading terrific echoes round;
And the shrill whistling of the wind
Starts from her bed the timid hind,
And breaks e'en drowsy Bruin's sleep;
While to their dens the scared wolves creep.†
The peasant in his cot below
Shrinks at the drifting clouds of snow;

* It is only eighty versts from the town of Nijna Kamtchatsk.

† Deer, bears, and wolves, in great numbers, inhabit the forests which cover the sides of the mountain.

Each gust augments his rising fears—
At night his troubled fancy hears
The shriek of friends in upper air.
Demons, who guide the whirlwinds there,
Swift mountain blasts impel with rage,
And more than mortal combats wage! *
Yet, when from eastern portals blaze
The ruddy morning's splendid rays,
Sublime amidst the tumult stands,
With brow that nature's self commands,
Tall Klutchee; he, clad in pure white,
Reflects the sunbeam's dazzling light,
And smiles derision on the gale
That still infests the gloomy vale.†
But most attractive to behold
His perfect and gigantic mould,
Beneath the summer's sun serene;
When forests, hills, and meadows green,
Bloom forth in nature's best attire.
The cots and herds, the village spire,‡

* The natives and inhabitants believe that evil spirits ride on the winds and direct the tempests, which, in winter, beat with loud uproar against this enormous volcano.

† The natives know by the summit of Klutchee appearing bright above the clouds, the approach of fine weather, even though the storm should continue to rage on the plains.

‡ There are two rivers, the Kamtchatka and Klutchee, meeting at the base of the volcano; and the village of Klutchee is on the bank of the former; it has a neat little church.

Two winding rivers, clear and fleet,
Mingling their waters at his feet,
All in romantic group unite
To fill the soul with new delight!
Contrasted with his frowning mien,
How lovely then the rustic scene,
Surrounding thus, a magic robe,
This mountain monarch of the globe!

We now pursued our way to an ostrog called Kammina, twenty versts below Klutchee, where we changed our canoes and men. Here we found a flat country full of ponds and lakes, and embankments, such as I have before mentioned as at Avatcha: and the geese, ducks, and teal, were in such immense flocks as I have no where seen in any other country. After leaving Kammina, the river widened to a considerable breadth, but was occasionally divided into many branches, formed by beautiful islands: but the current lost its rapidity, and conveyed us much more slowly: however, we made forty-four versts to Kammakee by four in the afternoon; but as we were here obliged to change men and canoes again, and perceived it would be impossible to reach Nijna Kamtchatka that night, we listened to the invitation of the Toyune to dine with him on fat geese and ducks, which he had prepared

for us. Here again I was astonished to see the quantity of geese and other wild fowl which hovered about the lakes and meadows, and I killed several in a few minutes. At our departure, although I told the Toyune I had killed as many wild fowl as we wanted, he would take no refusal, and had a quantity put into our canoes. When the Kamtchatdales offer any thing they are greatly mortified if it is not accepted.

After thanking him, and leaving him a little tea and sugar in return, we took our leave, and continued on our journey, until nine at night, when we arrived at a place called Tschokee, only eighteen versts from Nijna Kamtchatsk. The night however was dark, the dew fell plentifully, and the weather being cold, we concluded it prudent to stop and pass the night at this place. One poor Kamtchatdale was the sole inhabitant of a miserable hut that had a small square hole cut over the oven instead of a chimney, thus keeping the greater part of the smoke within. He had lost the sight of an eye, and I was only surprised that he preserved the other. By keeping ourselves seated, we avoided putting our heads into the volume of black smoke that rolled above us; and we got a good cup of tea and a

comfortable supper. We also passed the night without being attacked by vermin. Indeed it would have been difficult for them to live there, for the inside of the house had acquired a shining black, as bright as if it had been covered with Japanese lacker.

On the morning of the 14th we ate our breakfast early, and set out through a thick fog, that, however, dispersed as the sun rose, and showed us a repetition of the same picturesque and beautiful scenery I have before described, which, though perfectly wild and uncultivated, could not fail to charm us with its great diversity.

We arrived at Nijna Kamtchatsk early in the forenoon.

CHAPTER II.

Author's reception at Nijna Kamtchatsk—General Petrowsky—Commencement of the return—Some remarks respecting Nijna Kamtchatsk—Tschokee—Kammakee—Shooting of ducks and geese—Klutchee—State of the people there—Fall of snow—Sherrom and its hospitable Toyune—Industry of his family—Edible roots—Arrival at Malka—Story of a perilous adventure on the ice—Nacheeka—Difficulties of the journey—Horses, dogs, and sledges—Karaikee—Embarkation in canoes on the river Avatcha—Re-arrival at St. Peter and St. Paul's—Observations on the temperature in Kamtchatka—Remarks on the character of the natives.

We were received, on landing at Nijna Kamtchatsk, by the general's secretary and the pastor, or *popa*, as the plebeian Russians call him. The colonel introduced me to those gentlemen, and then conducted me to his own house that was near at hand. It was of wood, but well put together, and neatly fitted up within; much better than I expected to have seen in Kamtchatka. The rest of the day

was spent in visits and dining with general Petrowsky, a fine hospitable old gentleman, of very agreeable manners and lively disposition. His house was also commodious and well built, of good larch timber, a wood that is in great quantities in the neighbourhood of Nijna Kamtchatsk, and is very strong and durable.

I spent six days very pleasantly with the general; and, as the autumn was far advanced, I made haste to return to St. Peter and St. Paul, before the snow should fall, and by spoiling the roads, oblige us to wait until we could travel with sledges.

At my departure, the hospitable old general did not fail to furnish me in the kindest manner with tea, sugar, biscuit, &c. for my journey back, for which I was the more thankful, as it enabled me to make some return for the friendly attentions of the natives.*

Nijna Kamtchatsk is situated on the river Kamtchatka, at thirty-five versts from the sea, and at that time was the seat of government,

* Tea and sugar form the most acceptable present to a Kamtchatdale; or indeed the former, even without sugar; for the latter being four to five rubles a pound, they have acquired the habit of drinking tea like the Chinese.

and consisted of eighty to ninety houses, and between four and five hundred inhabitants. It has since been almost depopulated, having at present only five or six houses left. The most of the buildings were sent to St. Peter's and St. Paul's, when the seat of government was removed to that place. The soldiers have been all sent out of the peninsula to Siberia. All the houses were of excellent larch wood, which abounds not far from Nijna Kamtchatsk. I cannot say much in favour of the situation where the town stood, for it is flat and moist, and the snow falls there in such quantities that it is very late in the spring before it is thawed so as to enable the inhabitants to plant their gardens. In almost every other part of Kamtchatka the cultivation of vegetables is very successful. Good potatoes, cabbages, turnips, &c. are produced in the interior of the peninsula, though they do not grow so large about the coast.

On the 20th September, after taking an early dinner with the general, we set off to mount against the stream of the river Kamtchatka, and return to St. Peter and St. Paul's. Our progress, however, was so very slow that it was dark before we arrived at the smoky hut of Tchokee, where we were happy to take up our

quarters, and find shelter from a cold raw wind that blew fresh against us.

In the morning the weather proved mild and agreeable, and we continued our journey. I could not resist the temptation to stop again a few hours at Kammakee, not only to examine the dykes and embankments, which are there numerous, but likewise to shoot some geese and ducks; for we saw immense flocks all around us. This was near about the season of their departure for a warmer climate; they therefore collect in large flocks about the meadows and dykes, where there is a plentiful stock of food. In the course of one hour, without moving from the spot where the Kamtchatdales placed me, I killed eight geese and fourteen ducks, which being much too large a stock for our party, I sent half of them by the return of the canoes to the general.

Our journey back promised to be very tedious as well as disagreeable, for we were going against the current in open canoes; and although the Kamtchatdales used every possible exertion, we could not go very fast. On our arrival at Klutchee I was obliged to leave my servant there, who had caught a cold and was in a hot fever. He returned to me, however,

to the port of St. Peter and St. Paul's in December, quite well.

At Klutchee there were about eighty or ninety peasants who formerly cultivated the ground, and got very good crops, of rye, oats, barley, &c.; but at this actual time there are not more than three or four amongst them who sow a little barley; the chase being more attractive and more profitable. These people, instead of drawing the natives to their mode of living and industry, neglect every thing like civilization, and are themselves now quite as wild and uncouth as the Kamtchatdales; besides being infinitely more vicious. They have potatoes in great abundance, and very fine and large; also good cabbages, turnips, cucumbers sometimes, and also pumpkins; and there is no doubt that, with proper attention, every sort of vegetable would suceeed there to admiration. I saw some good hemp that grew almost without cultivation; and at Shegatchik, Werkney, and Milkova, higher up the river, I found as good rye and wheat growing as I ever saw in Russia. However, this has all been laid aside since the departure of the soldiers; and now there are only a few poods * of barley sown at those places. The

* A pood is thirty-six English pounds.

cultivation of the ground will never be attended to until the country becomes peopled, and the chase less advantageous. A people who are content to eat dried fish instead of bread, and can catch in a few days as many as will serve them for the winter, cannot be easily weaned from that mode of life. In the winter, if they have good luck, they catch as many sables and foxes as will procure them watky, tobacco, and tea; and they are perfectly indifferent to every other luxury.

We were nine days re-ascending the river to Kirganik, during which time, although the evenings and mornings were cold, the days were mild and agreeable, with an unclouded sky. Since leaviug Sherrom on the 6th, we had some fogs, but no bad weather, except a few hours on the night of the 11th; so that we had twenty-four days of sunshine almost in succession—a state of weather certainly which I did not think of seeing in a mountainous country, between fifty and sixty degrees of north latitude. Towards the last of September the nights were frosty, but no severe cold occurred; or we could not have slept as we did in our open canoes.

On the 1st of October (which is five or six days sooner than ordinary), the snow and rain

came down together, and made my journey from Kirganick to Werkney Kamtchatsk quite uncomfortable. Anxious to arrive soon at St. Peter and St. Paul's, although the snow continued on the 2d to fall adundantly, we mounted our horses, and proceeded to Sherrom, where the hospitable old Toyune and his family would not suffer us to go farther; and the weather was so very bad, we were readily induced to accept of his hospitality for the night.

The morning brought us a fine bright day, and we pursued our journey, leaving with regret our old host, who was not less amusing and intelligent than kind and good. I mention him particularly, as he was a very uncommon Kamtchatdale, being remarkably provident and industrious. His ostrog had twenty-four men; but of that number there were only seven or eight who were in health, and able to fish and hunt. Notwithstanding, they caught fish enough for all the inhabitants and the dogs; and also made hay to support seventeen cows and a horse. The Toyune's family consisted of a wife, two sons, a daughter, and a daughter-in-law; all of whom seemed to possess the same active disposition and industry that distinguished the master of the house.

The following is an account of the produce of the chace and the industry of this little family, for one season. I give it to enable the reader to form a judgment of the Kamtchatdale living and economy; though I must say at the same time, that very few Kamtchatdales indeed lived so well as Merlin, because he was sober, active, and frugal; rare qualities amongst those people. He assured me that himself and his sons had killed twelve bears, eleven mountain-sheep, several rein-deer, a large number of geese, ducks, and teal, and a few swans and pheasants. "In November," said he, "we shall catch many hares and partridges; and I have one thousand fresh salmon lately caught, and now frozen for our winter's stock. Added to this, in my cellar there is a good stock of cabbages, turnips, and potatoes; with various sorts of berries, and about thirty poods of sarannas,* the greater part of which we have stolen from the field-mice, who collect them in large quantities also for winter!" He then showed me two other roots, one called makarshina,† about two inches in

* *Lilium pomponium.* The sweeter species is very palatable, having something the flavour of a wet potatoe, with a sweetish bitter taste.

† Bistorta, foliis ovata, oblongis acuminatis.

length, and the thickness of the little finger, covered with a rough, brown skin, and having, when peeled, a slight astringent bitter, with the flavour of a chesnut. The Kamtchatdales eat it raw. The name of the other root is kim-sheega, a sort of wild potatoe, the botanic name of which I do not know. A plant of which the natives are excessively fond of eating in the spring, whilst young, is what is called in Russia *sloka trava* *. When the centre stalk, which is hollow like that of the parsnip, runs to seed, and is stripped of the outer skin, it is very tender and palatable. These the Kamtchatdales call *pootchkee*. The stalks of their leaves are also hollow; but the juice is so corrosive, the natives when eating them always take great care not to let them touch the lips in putting them into their mouths. Should the juice touch the lips or any part of the face, it produces a blister, and eventually a sore resembling that occasioned by burning or scalding. I have seen this plant split and dried, when it appears to be somewhat impregnated with the saccharine principle, adheres to the fingers when pressed, and has a sweetish taste. The liquor distilled from this

* Spondilium foliole pinnatifide.

plant is said to be very good, but extremely intoxicating.

We continued our route from Sherrom on horseback, but did not get to Malka before another snow-storm assailed us, and were glad to arrive and remain in the latter place until it was over. The snow however fell in such quantities as made it difficult to travel with horses; and we could not leave them, because they belonged to the government, and must be taken to Avatcha, where hay was prepared to keep them during the winter.

The Toyune of Malka related to me a curious adventure that occurred to him and two of his friends, which, at first, I was inclined to doubt; but as it has been since confirmed to me by several persons in Kamtchatka, I give it to my readers. Every spring Spiridon and some of his friends were in the habit of going to the coast between Bolcherisk and Tigil, to kill hair-seals and other sea-animals. The Kamtchatdales use the fat of these both for oil and butter; and the skins serve to make boot soles and thongs, so that the hunting of the animals once a year is a matter of no small importance. Our Toyune, therefore, with his two friends, repaired in the latter part of April to their usual hunting

place, where they found the sea still covered with ice for a considerable extent. Each had a sledge and five dogs; and although the wind blew strongly off shore, they did not hesitate to go on the ice in search of seals, as it seemed firmly attached to the shore, and they observed some Kamtchatdales hunting on it farther up the coast. They discovered some seals at a considerable distance out, and repaired thither to kill them. Already had they killed two, and were preparing to tie them with thongs on their sledges, when one of the party who staid a little behind, came to them of a sudden, crying out that the ice was moving, and that all the other Kamtchatdales had gone to the shore! This news alarmed them so much that they left the seals on the ice, and, seating themselves on their sankas, or sledges, pushed their dogs at full speed to regain the shore. Unfortunately they arrived too late; the ice had already separated from the land to the extent of a hundred yards; and as it began to break into pieces, they were obliged to return to the part that appeared to them the strongest and thickest. As the wind now blew extremely hard, they were soon driven out to sea, where, the swell being very heavy, the ice began to break again all around them,

leaving them at last on a solid clump from forty to fifty feet in circumference, that was of great thickness, and kept entire. They were now out of sight of land, driven before a gale of wind and a heavy sea, and their icy vessel rolled so dreadfully they had much difficulty to keep themselves on its surface. However, being all furnished with ostals,* they made holes and planted them firmly in the ice; and then tied themselves, their dogs, and sankas fast to them. Without this precaution, the Toyune said, they would have been all thrown into the sea. They were sea-sick, weak, and disheartened; but nevertheless, said Spiridon, "I had hopes, and I told my comrades, I thought we should be thrown on some coast." It was now two days they had been at sea, and towards evening the wind abated a little, the weather cleared off, and they saw land not far off, which one of them, who had been formerly at the Kurile Islands, knew to be Poromochir, and they now fully expected to be drifted on its shores. However, as the night approached, the wind changed to

* The ostal is a staff about five feet in length, crooked a little at one end, and armed with an iron point, that is thrust into the snow or ice, and held before the sanka to stop the dogs.

the very opposite direction, and blew even more violently than before. The clump of ice was tossed about in a most uneasy manner, and several times the ostals and the thongs were in danger of being broken by the violent concussion of the waves against the ice.

All that night and all the next day the storm continued with unceasing violence. On the morning of the 4th day, before daylight, they found that their clump had been driven amongst other cakes of ice, and was closely surrounded on all sides. The wind had abated entirely; the waves also had subsided, and all was calm and still. When the day broke, how great was their joy and astonishment to perceive themselves near the land, and within about twenty versts of the place from whence they had been driven! They had suffered much from thirst, as they found the ice salt as well as the water. Not having either eaten or drunk during all the time, they found themselves so weak that they had the greatest difficulty in preparing their sledges, and in getting from the ice to the land. The moment they landed, they offered up their prayers and thanks to God. Spiridon charged his companions not to eat snow or drink much water at a time, although they were almost

dying with thirst; as they could soon get to an ostrog that was only about twenty to thirty versts distant. They had not proceeded far before Spiridon saw the tracks of some reindeer; he therefore made his companions stop, and taking his gun walked gently round a high bluff on the coast, whither the deer had gone; and had the good fortune to shoot one of them. His companions no sooner heard the noise of the gun than they came to him. They cut the throat of the deer immediately, and drank his blood while warm. Spiridon said that they felt their strength revived almost immediately after drinking the blood. Having given some of the meat to the dogs, they rested themselves about an hour, and then set off for the ostrog, where they arrived safely. One of them, who indulged too much in eating at first, died a short time after: the other two survived; but Spiridon said he had ever since been afflicted with a complaint in his breast, and shortness of breath.

After the snow storm, the weather became clear and cold; and although we left Malka very early, the snow was so deep we did not get to Nacheeka, *the seat of bugs and fleas*, until night. I remembered my misfortune, and had my bed made in an out-house or store, called

in Russian the *ambar;* where, although not as warm as I could have wished, I found cleanliness, and no vermin.

In the night it snowed again; and I expressed my fear of attempting to go forty-four versts with horses to Karaikee; as, from the deepness of the snow, they would probably be unable to proceed, and might die for want of food by the way. However, at Nacheeka there were not dogs enough to supply us; nor was there much hay; so we determined to proceed as well as we could, without further delay.

We set off early, on an extremely cold morning; but it was three or four in the afternoon before we got one third of the distance; for the poor beasts sank to their bellies in the snow, and it was not without difficulty we kept them moving. At length they lay down, and neither beating nor coaxing could get them any further. After giving them about an hour's rest, we got them to move on again about half a verst, until we came to the side of a small rivulet, where we made a fire, cut some branches from the trees to put under us, and there passed the night, by no means comfortably.

Perceiving there was a possibility of our being kept two days on the road to Karaikee, I dis-

patched a Kamtchatdale, who had a pair of snow-shoes, to that ostrog, with orders to return in the morning with dogs and sledges, and some hay for the horses; the poor animals having eaten nothing but twigs all day.

On the following morning we set off early. Though our horses were refreshed, they still appeared weak, and went on but slowly. We were overjoyed to perceive the track of a bear exactly in our road, conceiving that our horses would follow his path, and find themselves relieved by it. To our great astonishment, when we made the trial, the bear was of such an enormous size, that not one of our horses could stretch his track, so that we reaped no advantage from it; and by one o'clock they were all so fatigued, they could go no further. Fortunately, about three P. M. the Kamtchatdale returned to us with three sledges drawn by dogs, and some hay for the horses. This enabled us to load all our baggage on the sledges, as well as to sit ourselves; and the horses, thus lightened of their burthens, after having been fed, proceeded on at a better pace. Notwithstanding this, we thought it best to advance on as fast as possible, and leave the horses under the care of a cossack, who accompanied me, and to whom I left a

brace of pistols, in case of his meeting with a bear.

When we arrived at Karaikee, we found there very little snow, and the inhabitants informed us that on the road to the port there was scarcely any; so that the horses would get to Avatcha with great ease. As there was no ice whatever in the river Avatcha, we did not think it necessary to await the arrival of the horses, and therefore embarked in canoes, and descended in a few hours to the port of St. Peter and St. Paul.

The weather continued good until the 21st, when it again commenced raining and snowing; but the snow at length prevailed, and assured us that winter was about to set in: however, the cold at St. Peter and St. Paul's (and, indeed, all over Kamtchatka) is never very severe. About the sea-coast it rarely passes 15 to 20 degrees of Reaumur, and in the interior seldom exceeds 20 to 25 degrees; and even this but for a short time. The ordinary cold is about 8 to 10 degrees of Reaumur.

During my journey I had been much pleased with the simple, honest, and mild conduct of the natives, whose hospitality and natural good disposition are beyond all praise. It is painful

to add, that of late years, since the felons from Siberia have been sent amongst them, they have lost much of their honesty, as well as of their other good qualities. I know not who recommended sending such inhabitants to Kamtchatka, but it was certainly very unwise, and has done much injury in various ways.

CHAPTER III.

The Author's second departure from St. Peter and St. Paul—Sledge-travelling—Renewed acquaintance with old Merlin—Climate of Kamtchatka—Tchappinna—Wild fowl and game—Argallis, or mountain sheep—Wild dogs, reindeer, &c.—Causes of depopulation in Kamtchatka—Tolbachik—Oushkee—Trait of simple gratitude—Klutchee—Second meeting with General Petrowsky—Village of Kharchinna—A Kamtchatdale dance—Yalofka—Bear-skins—Case of misfortune—Ozernoy—Singular marriage custom—Remarks on the habits and character of the Kamtchatdales.

BEING anxious to get to Russia, I felt pleased to see the winter at last fairly established, and wished to hasten my departure, as I had promised to pay another visit to the general ere I should quit altogether the peninsula.

My *kibitka*,* baggage, &c. being all prepared, I left the port of St. Peter and St. Paul on the 15th day of January 1813, with the determination to proceed round the Aleuters coast, by the way

* A covered sledge.

of Kamminah, Igiga, and Towisk, to Ochotsk, during the winter and spring. My conveyance was by means of dogs; and a number of my acquaintances, all drawn by dogs, accompanied me twelve versts off to Avatcha. We formed a numerous party, and a very curious one, such as is seen in no other part of the world. The eagerness and impatience of the dogs, and the rivalry of the *kyoorshiks*,* were worthy to be compared with the exertions of the high-blood coursers and jockies of Newmarket. Nor does the management and driving of dogs require much less skill and attention than are needed in the latter case to arrive at perfection, and the palm of victory. Our journey to Avatcha was literally a race; and a highly novel and interesting one to a stranger. My kyoorshik was a cossack who had made too free with the bottle, so that during the night, in going to Koraikee, he overset me four or five times. These frequent accidents so delayed me, that I did not get there until between three and four in the morning. Two Chinese servants accompanied me, who were also unfortunate in having had a drunken driver, and they complained heavily of being

* The men who guide the dogs.

rolled in the *white hard water*, as they called it, until I taught them to say *snow*. As they were both natives of the country about Macao, and had never before seen snow, they were greatly surprised the first time it snowed, and ran to me to inquire what it was that came down so white, like feathers!

It would be needless to lead my readers regularly by the diifferent stations, or ostrogs, the same as I had passed, and have described, in my summer's excursion. I shall, therefore, say briefly that we stopped at Malka, Pooschinna, and Sherrom, where we met, if possible, with more hospitality than before; particularly at the latter place, where old Conon Merlin, with his long white beard, and a countenance expressive of the greatest benevolence and generosity, received us in a manner denoting much joy and satisfaction. He asked a thousand questions about the Chinese and their country, and made shrewd remarks on every thing that was related to him of that extraordinary people, of whom he had now seen two examples for the first time.

Our excellent host was not content with merely entertaining me at his house; but, although the morning was very cold, insisted on

accompanying me to Werkney Kamtchatsk. I would not let him go on the sanka, so we placed him in a covered sledge; and he declared it was the only time in all his life he had ridden under cover.

At our departure we were overwhelmed with kindness; and an abundance of good things were put into my kibitka that I was forced to receive. The frost was for three days at 21 and 22 degrees of Reaumur, and I asked the old Toyune, who was about 70 years of age, if it was common to have it so cold? He said, no; that he had rarely seen it so severe; but, added he, "this cold only lasts with us two or three days at a time, at intervals twice or thrice during the winter, when the weather becomes mild again." By this account the reader will perceive that Kamtchatka, hitherto considered as the *finis mundi*, cold, dreary, and unfit for the habitation of man, possesses a much better climate than we could have imagined. A residence of nearly five years there afterwards convinced me of the truth of this old man's assertions.

We now passed on rapidly with our dogs until we arrived at Tchappinna, when a severe snow storm, of long continuance, obliged us to remain until the morning of the 28th of Janu-

ary. The snow was so deep, we found it impossible to proceed without having a Kamtchatdale to go before us, on snow-shoes, to beat the road, and even then we went so slowly that we did not arrive at Tolbatchick until nine o'clock at night; both men and dogs much fatigued. When it snows, the weather generally becomes quite warm, which, added to the difficulty of drawing the sledges through it, makes the dogs experience great lassitude and labour.

Between the two ostrogs, I was surprised to see two small rivers entirely free from ice; and on inquiry found they were supplied from warm springs in the neighbourhood, and therefore never freeze.

There is a very fine-flavoured species of wild duck, called by the natives *gogols*, which are found here the winter through; and, as they live on the root of an aquatic herb common in those rivers, their flesh is extremely delicious and juicy. Their plumage is black and white; they are very broad over the breast; make a whistling noise as they fly through the air; and are in size like a widgeon. The rivers they inhabit, between Tschappina and Tolbachick, run through some very fine forests of larch and spruce trees, which shelter them from the wea-

ther, and afford them a calm winter's retreat. These, however, are not the only places in Kamtchatka where water-fowl are found during the winter. At Malka, at Koraikee, at the lakes of Paratoonka, and some other places, there are warm springs where the duck and mallard, teal, shelldrake, and swan, are found the winter through. The wild geese, and indeed all the water-fowl of Kamtchatka, are extremely fat and high-flavoured; and I imagine this is caused by their feeding on the white tender root of an aquatic herb, a species of water-lily, called by the natives the *goose seranna.*

Whilst on this subject I may be allowed to say a few words of the argallis, or mountain sheep, which abound on almost all the craggy and steep mountains of the Peninsula, and more particularly on the extinct volcanoes. The argallis is not quite as large as the reindeer, is infinitely more agile, and climbs the highest pinnacles, walking securely over the rugged rocks which impend the steepest precipices, inaccessible to man, and in fact to every other animal. To those impregnable redoubts they repair whenever they are attacked by wolves, bears, or any beast of prey; the old rams bringing up the rear, with their enormous

horns curled into a circle after the manner of the domestic sheep; only much more formidable. A single horn of a very old ram will weigh from fifteen to twenty Russian pounds. These animals are found also in abundance on the opposite shores of the Ochotsk sea; but never in the interior. The Tongusees and the Koraikees make cups, spoons, and various utensils of their horns. I have been told by the Kamtchatdales that rams sometimes kill each other in fighting, and a blow from one of them would kill any other animal immediately. They are very broad over the breast, the bones being knit together in the strongest manner; and what is called the brisket is particularly thick and firm. When pursued to the edge of a rock or precipice, they have been seen to curl the fore legs under the body, and let themselves fall on their breasts against the rocks beneath, to the distance of twelve to twenty feet, leaving their astonished pursuers on the top of the height from whence they sprung, to admire their agility and wonder that they have not been dashed to atoms. They have a thick skin well furnished with hair that resembles the reindeer's in colour, but has none of that oily disagreeable smell belonging to the wool of our sheep; consequently, though it may

touch the flesh, in skinning the animal, it never causes any disagreeable taste. The flesh may be said to have the flavour of the most delicious and delicate mutton, without any of the strong taste which that acquires whenever the wool is suffered to touch the flesh. The epicures no doubt will lament that such delicate food is confined to the wilds of Siberia! The argallis do not always inhabit those inaccessible places. In the autumn, especially, they are found about the base of the mountains, where the hardy hunter kills a number for his winter stock. As the place where he finds them is sometimes at a great distance from home, he hangs them up in the trees, where they are frozen, and they remain until he can go with his dogs and sledge to bring them away. He takes care, however, to cover them well with bark and branches to keep them from the crows, and he tears all the bark from the bodies of the trees and makes them as smooth as possible, that bears may not climb them: however, the *roussomak*, an animal of prey, called by some the wild dog, sometimes robs the trees in spite of his best precautions.

Reindeer also abound in the peninsula; not to mention the numerous herds of domesticated

deer kept by the reindeer Koraikees. If we add hares, partridges, and black game,* with a great variety of water-fowl, and an innumerable quantity of fish of the salmon species, it is evident that none but the careless and indolent, even of that portion of the inhabitants who are totally unacquainted with the arts of civilized life, can possibly suffer for want of food.

I have digressed to show the reader what Kamtchatka naturally possesses, and to combat an opinion long prevalent in Russia, that Kamtchatka was a barren desolate country, depopulated of the aborigines through the extreme poverty of its resources. The real causes of its depopulation have been diseases, ardent spirits, and the venal administration of those who have been sent to govern it. God has been bountiful to all Siberia, but He has been particularly so to Kamtchatka; and certainly, if it were adequately peopled, there is no part of Siberia more capable of repaying the cares of human industry. It must be confessed, however, that the finest country and the richest soil are useless without inhabitants. When neglected and left to a

* Called in Russian, *glukhari* in French, *coq de bruère*. In Kamtchatka there are no wood-hens *(gellinots)*, or pheasants, though they abound in Siberia.

scanty number of families, uncivilized and unacquainted with agriculture, it soon retrogrades into its original wildness and coldness; and in proportion as the population decreases, the dependent associations of industry are destroyed, and the difficulty of living according to the rules of civilization is increased at every moment. How is it possible for 2500 souls, who are principally hunters, dispersed over that immense tract of country, to become farmers, mechanics, labourers, &c. &c. at one and the same time? I am persuaded the Kamtchatdales, nay, even the Russians born in Kamtchatka, can never be weaned from their fondness for hunting and an uncivilized life, until the country shall become well peopled, and the fish and game much scarcer than at present.

After leaving Tolbachik the roads were good, and we soon arrived at Oushkee. Here the inhabitants were few, and those few miserable. I therefore distributed some presents amongst them, which I had brought purposely. My distribution was nearly finished, when I observed a lad whose features I recognized, and immediately questioned him where he belonged to. He said, "I am from the Tigil coast, and have been sent here to assist travellers; and I

helped to row you down the river last summer. As I have been always very busy, I have been but once at the chase, but I killed a sable, and I kept it on purpose to repay your kindness, for the knife and flints you gave me." When I observed that this poor fellow was misery personified, not a shirt on his back, and the skin dress he had on all in tatters, I refused to accept his offer. He burst into tears, and was about to leave the room, when I made him return, and took his sable from him in return for what I had ordered to be given him; at which he seemed quite happy. The Kamtchatdales are not only grateful for favours, but they think it absolutely necessary to make some return for a present, and are highly offended if it is refused. One of my Chinese servants, who was a very good-hearted fellow, was so affected at the above circumstance, and the miserable appearance of the Kamtchatdale boy, that he went and brought one of his blue Nankin shirts, and made him a present of it.

After quitting this place we proceeded rapidly on to Klutchee, where we had the satisfaction of seeing the magnificent volcano throwing out a volume of flame that streaked the sky for many miles.

As I was now only eighty versts from Nijna Kamtchatsk, I hastened on to pay the general another visit, obtain my passport, and then set off by the Oukinsky coast to make the tour round the peninsula to Ochotsk.

We found General Petrowsky, as usual, kind and hospitable; but I resisted his pressing invitation to remain awhile longer, fearful that the season was already too far advanced to accomplish my journey safely over the winter roads. I therefore took my leave of the general, and returned to Klutchee, where I had left my servants to prepare all my sledges, &c. for the road.

In spite of my best exertions, I did not get off from Klutchee until the 23d of February (1813). The captain spravnick, a Major Downing, accompanied me for a considerable distance; and our party altogether consisted of seven or eight sledges, drawn by seventy to eighty dogs.

We arrived at Kharchinna, the first station from Klutchee, thirty versts off, about evening; and we there passed the night. The village is situated on a fine river named Yalofka, that has its source in the Tigil ridge of mountains about ninety versts distant, and empties itself into the Kamtchatka. On its banks the larch is uncommonly fine, as well as the spruce and

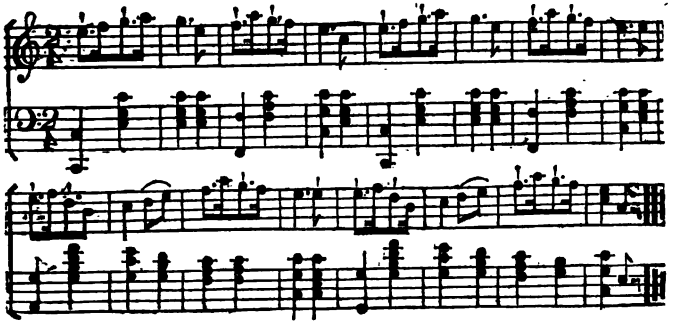
other timber, but the former is most abundant, and of a large size. It may be easily rafted down to Nijna Kamtchatsk. There are some fine lakes in the neighbourhood, which abound with trout and salmon peal of a particularly fine flavour and very large size. The bellies of them have the taste of game, something like the trail of a woodcock. Our kind host, the Toyune, hearing me praise them, insisted on furnishing me with a stock of frozen ones for my journey, which I afterwards found very acceptable. His family were the tallest and best-looking Kamtchatdales I had seen in the peninsula; one of the sons measured near six feet, and his sisters almost as much — a very rare thing, for the Kamtchatdales in general are under-sized.

As I had never seen the Kamtchatdale national dance performed, and heard that there were two women in this family famous for dancing it well, I prevailed upon the host's son-in-law, who played the fiddle, to use his influence to get them to dance for me. It was a long time before we could succeed with them. They appeared so extremely modest, diffident, and abashed to the sight of a stranger, that I almost began to despair of success. After much

solicitation, however, they consented, and performed in a manner that excited my admiration and astonishment. Every feature of the face and muscle of the body seemed in motion at the same instant; and I was truly surprised to see two females, who were at first so excessively timid they could hardly look us in the face, all of a sudden, when the music began, seeming as if seized with a sort of frenzy, that can only be compared to the descriptions I have read of the dances of the Bacchantes. The whole frame was violently agitated, and distorted into a hundred different postures; some of the gestures were by no means ungraceful, but, at the same time, not altogether decent. This was formerly the national dance of the peninsula, and is called bakhéah. As the tune is melodious and agreeable, I have here annexed a draft of it, for the entertainment of those who love untutored music.

KAMTCHATDALE AIR, called BAKHEAH.

Moderato e ben marcato.



We left Kharchinna on the morning of the 24th, and accomplished fifty-four versts that day to Yalofka, an ostrog or village of ten houses, situated on the river of the same name, enjoying the advantage of fine natural meadows, and fish and game in abundance. Although bears are very numerous there, they find so much fish to eat that they never kill the cattle, as they often do at Klutchee, Werkney, and other parts where the river is deep, and the fishing difficult.*

* The Kamchatdales also say, that if a bear kills a man, however hungry he may be, he will not eat him; but will carefully scrape a hole, put him into it, and cover him up with dirt and leaves.

It appears that they prefer fish and berries to every other food; nor will a fat bear attack a man unless hunted or wounded. These animals are very useful to the natives. Their skins serve them for coverings and for beds, and, when tanned with birch-bark, prove extremely strong for thongs, ropes, &c. to bind their sankas; while the fat serves instead of oil for their lamps. Those natives who inhabit the sea-coasts hunt the hair-seals, whose fat and skins are also employed for the same purposes, as well as for making soles for their boots. To prepare them for the sole-leather, they stretch them on a frame, and expose them to the frost for two months at least. Others they tan and dye a good red colour with the bark of the alder. Deer skins are dyed in the same manner, except those of the young animals, which are always of a yellow colour, produced by the bark of the willow.

The unfortunate Toyune of this ostrog was an object that excited emotions of pity. He had been educated to write and read, and was very clever and exceedingly industrious. His anxiety to pay up the arrears of his ostrog due to government, made him use uncommon exertions in hunting sables and foxes, and exposing himself too often to the inclemency of the winter.

He thereby contracted a disease that deprived him of the use of his limbs and his senses at the same time. It seemed like a settled sort of stupidity, and he had a paralysis of one side. Although he appeared to me incurable, yet, as I had some medicines with me, and his friends pressed me much to try what could be done, I gave him some whilst there, and left them a stock, with directions how to treat him. On my return to Kamtchatka, four years afterwards, I learned that he had recovered his health, and was likely to live many years.

A deep snow fell on the night of the 24th; and, although I had twelve dogs to my kibitka, I was obliged to get four more, making in all sixteen; and with them I performed eighty versts to Ozernoy by eight o'clock at night.

This village is also situated on a fine river, that runs out of a large lake forty versts off in one of the mountains of the Tigil ridge, and empties itself into the sea about one hundred versts below the ostrog. The mouth of the river is shallow, and is impeded in some parts by sand-banks. It is nevertheless quite deep enough to admit small coasting vessels. How easy would it be to send salt, flour, and many other things much wanted, to this coast by sea, instead of the

troublesome and difficult way of taking them thither with dogs! I found, on conversing with the Toyune, that the Kamtchatdales of Oukinsky coast have adopted some of the customs and habits of their northern neighbours, the Karaikees. For instance; should a young man fall in love with a girl, and that he is not rich enough to obtain her by any other means, he immediately enslaves himself to her father as a servant for three, four, five, or ten years, according to agreement, before he is permitted to marry her. When the term agreed on expires, he is allowed to marry her, and live with the father-in-law as if he were his own son. During the time of his servitude, he lives on the smiles of his mistress, which ought to be very benignant to enable him to endure so long the frowns of an imperious master, who never spares him from the severest labour and fatigue. Our Toyune himself assured me he had served three years for his wife under a very hard master, and that nothing but the love he bore his intended bride could have made him support it!

All the Kamtchatdales I met with were Christians of the Greek persuasion, and appeared attentive to their devotions. Their hospitality, as the reader must have already remarked, is

excessive, and it is carried to an extreme amongst themselves that becomes ridiculous. They pay one another visits, which last for a month or six weeks, until the generous host, finding his stock of provisions exhausted, is forced to give a hint to his guest to take his departure. This is managed by presenting to him at dinner a dish called *tolkootha*, a kind of olio, or hodge podge, composed of a number of meats, fish, and vegetables, all mixed together, and very difficult to prepare. It is the *dernier resort* of the master of the house, and the moment this dish is served up, the guests take the hint, and leave him the following day, without feeling in the least dissatisfied; the proceeding being understood amongst them.

I thought at first the natives of Kamtchatka were rather stupid; but I soon found they were more timid than dull, and possessed a good deal of that quickness and cunning belonging to the Asiatics generally. You do not discover a Kamtchatdale well until he has drunk a glass or two of watky. Their remarks are sometimes very clever, and exhibit good strong common sense.

The first thing a traveller must do when he arrives at a Kamtchatdale house, is to treat the

[illegible] which they are excessively [illegible]. Kamtchatdale drink eleven [illegible] at a sitting; and he de- [illegible] completed the dozen, had [illegible] in the kettle!

[illegible] with rather an effe- [illegible] of the simplest lan- [illegible] with good sense. [illegible] to come to the *point* [illegible] their meaning by some [illegible] relation to bears, *dogs*, [illegible]

CHAPTER IV.

An excursion on snow-shoes—Ouka—Further remarks on the resources of Kamtchatka—Khallule—Mode of constructing Jourtas—Rivers Khallule and Nacheeka—Frozen state of the sea-shore—Ostrog and river of Evashka—The Kamtchatdale climate—Dranka—Karagee Ostrog and River—An invalid—Violent snow-storm—Another kind host—Timlatee.

It snowed all the morning, with a violent gale of wind, and we therefore awaited fair weather. About four P. M. the sun shone forth, and I made an excursion on my snow-shoes to examine the situation of the place. The natives told me they had fine meadows; but, as usual, there was not a cow to be seen. Many parts of the river remain open during the winter; as does the lake from whence it runs, and which is supplied by warm springs, and affords fish and game the year round.

As it proved a fine clear night, we set off about midnight to go thirty-six versts to Ouka; but the snow was so soft, we did not get there until ten o'clock on the morning of the 27th.

Ouka is on a river bearing the same name, that has its source in the north Nacheeka ridge of mountains (thirty or forty versts distant), and makes a course of seventy or eighty versts to the ocean. Another large river runs out of the north Nacheeka ridge, called Nacheeka, that unites its stream with the Ouka, about twenty versts below the ostrog. At the mouth of the Ouka there is a beautiful little port, large enough for vessels to enter which do not exceed one hundred and fifty tons; and although there are sand-banks at the entrance, there are good channels between them, so that these are easily avoided. On the banks of both those rivers there are large tracts of natural meadows; the country round abounds with the argallis, reindeer, and all sorts of game; and the rivers, as well as four lakes only twenty-four versts from the ostrog, are very plentifully supplied with fish. The sea coast abounds with hair-seals, sea elephants, &c. as well as cod fish and other sea fish.

Providence has been bountiful to this peninsula, which only wants population and industry to render it rich and flourishing. Even the bleak moss-covered moors, where there is not a bush to regale the eye, afford nourishment to

innumerable herds of reindeer. Nature indeed has done much for Kamtchatka, but man nothing; or, if he has interfered, it would appear that he has only done so to pervert or destroy the liberal donations of Heaven. Wherever one travels, the marks of misery, desolation, and depopulation present themselves! Shortly after the battalion of soldiers was sent thither from Siberia, the small-pox, an epidemic fever, the venereal, together with the introduction of ardent spirits, almost swept from the face of the soil the Kamtchatdale race. The miserable remnant does not actually amount to more than seven or eight hundred souls.

I have always regretted that the soldiers were sent back to Siberia, as a great many of them being married took with them their wives and children. It would have been much better to disband them in Kamtchatka, in order to cultivate the soil and increase the population of a spot so much in want of inhabitants. Certainly the fisheries, and particularly the whale fishery, which might be established at Kamtchatka, if properly managed, are of themselves a source of great wealth. Besides, that country is in the near neighbourhood of the richest and the most populous parts of the globe. In ten or twelve

days, a passage may be made to any part of the Japanese Islands; in thirty or forty days, to the Sandwich Islands, to Macao, to the Philippines, or any of the Indo-Chinese Islands; in sixty days, to the north west coast of America, California, or the Islands of the great Pacific ocean. There is no place more advantageously situated for commerce, and no place that enjoys so little.

The Kamtchatdales themselves seem to feel the want of more inhabitants, and the value they would be of to their country. I asked the Toyune of Ouka if he should be pleased at seeing a vessel arrive at his little port with a cargo of tea, sugar, nankin, and other luxuries. "Those things," said he, "to us, who have so little, would be very acceptable; but I should be more pleased if they would send a cargo of men; for, out of twelve or fifteen sons to compose my ostrog, I have only five at who are able to hunt and fish." This answer showed his penetration and

I found many of the natives monary complaints from exp exercise, and the habit of eating ing cold water, when in a high tion. These imprudences bring

in the breast and side, short breathing, a hollow cough, and spitting of blood; and death soon follows. For some who were ill of various chronic complaints, I left medicines and directions with the Toyune; and had afterwards the satisfaction to hear that they recovered.

On the 27th, at two o'clock, we set out from Ouka, and reached Khallule about twelve o'clock at night. The greater part of our road lay through a wide valley, composed of meadows bounded by a ridge of mountains at a considerable distance, the ground rising gradually from the valley to their base.

Three jòurtas, built in the Karaikee manner, composed the ostrog, which is situated on the river Khallule, that has its source in one of the upper mountains of the Tigil ridge, and empties itself into the sea at only two versts from the village. [illegible] the river Nacheeka, half-way between [illegible] and Ouka, was formerly an ostrog with [illegible] twenty inhabitants; but [illegible] were [illegible] by the small-pox. As [illegible] asked the Toyune why [illegible] of [illegible] but [illegible] uses [illegible] [illegible]

cure it; for the few men about me are obliged to be diligent in fishing and hunting; they are, therefore, compelled to make such buildings as the timber near them will afford."

A jourta of this sort is generally a frame of timber put into a square hole, four or five feet deep; and within the frame a quantity of stakes are set close together, inclining a little inwards, and the earth thrown against them. The stakes are left round on the outside, but hewed within, and the top is framed over in the same manner, and is arched and supported by stanchions. In the centre of the roof is a square hole that serves the double purpose of a door and a chimney, the inhabitants passing in or out by means of a piece of timber placed against the edge of the hole, with notches cut in it to receive the feet —a miserable substitute for a ladder! The top and sides are covered without with a quantity of earth, and sodded. At one end there is a large hole with a stopper to it, which is opened when the oven is heating, to force the smoke out at the door. When once heated, and the stopper closed, jourtas are warmer than most wooden houses, and were it not for the smoke, that is excessive, they would be comfortable winter dwellings. They are made of various

sizes and descriptions; and some of them that have floors are really decent and bear something the appearance of a house under ground.

Not satisfied exactly with the Toyune's account, I took an excursion the following morning to examine the mouths of the two rivers Khallule and Nacheeka, both emptying themselves into Nacheeka bay. This bay makes a deep indentation of sixty to seventy versts inland, and is bounded on the west by Khallule Noss, and on the east by Nacheekinskoy Noss. Karaggee Island appeared about forty versts distant from the mouth of the bay, which is formed by Nacheeka river, where it widens from fifteen to thirty versts, and where I was assured by the natives there is very good anchorage to be found, in its sinuosities. The Toyune remembered to have seen one of the Company's transports enter there some twenty or thirty years previously. From my own observation, and the information I collected from the natives, I am persuaded it is the best harbour, after St. Peter and St. Paul's, of any on the northern coast. At the entrance the sea is free from rocks and shoals; and the land about it, though high, is not so rocky as most parts of the coast of the peninsula.

We set out early on the 29th from Khallule, and by midnight our dogs brought us sixty-five versts to Evashka! A large portion of the road lay close along the sea-coast, where we could discover nothing but ice as far as the eye could reach, thrown up in such huge uncouth heaps as if the very waves had been congealed whilst they were rolling.

The ostrog of Evashka is situated on the river Evashka, that runs from a source sixty to seventy versts off, to the southward and westward in the northernmost Tigil ridge of mountains, and falls into the sea at six versts distance. The mouth is obstructed with sand banks; it is therefore only navigable for small craft: but it abounds with fish, as do also two lakes close in the neighbourhood.

We ate some of the trout and salmon peal, which had been kept in a frozen state since November; and they tasted as fresh and good as if they had been just caught. Our host's jourta was the cleanest and largest I had ever seen on this coast; every thing was prepared in the most comfortable manner for our reception; and the Toyune was both hospitable and intelligent. By his account, even in this heart of Kamtchatka (about the fifty-fourth or fifty-fifth degree of

latitude) the climate is not nearly so severe as one would imagine. In May the sea is clear of ice, but they have floating ice until the middle of June; and the snow that falls in the latter end of April and the commencement of May thaws immediately; and the moment the spring is established, the vegetation is rapid beyond conception. He said their summers were warm and the autumns invariably mild, the latter continuing so until the 5th to the 10th of October, without snow, and with no severe frost before the 10th of November.

The next day we went twenty-nine versts to Dranka, situated on the Umegonova river, that takes its rise at seventy versts distance in the Lessnofsky mountains. It is shallow and navigable only for boats, having several dangerous rocks and sand-banks at the entrance.

Having some repairs to make to my kibitka, we did not leave this place until the 3rd of March, when we proceeded on our journey, and made fifty versts to Karaggee; where the Toyune as usual received us with the greatest kindness and hospitality. His ostrog is on the banks of Karaggee river, that has its source about one hundred versts off (also in the Lessnofsky mountains), and flows into the sea at four or five

troublesome and difficult way of taking them thither with dogs! I found, on conversing with the Toyune, that the Kamtchatdales of Oukinsky coast have adopted some of the customs and habits of their northern neighbours, the Karaikees. For instance; should a young man fall in love with a girl, and that he is not rich enough to obtain her by any other means, he immediately enslaves himself to her father as a servant for three, four, five, or ten years, according to agreement, before he is permitted to marry her. When the term agreed on expires, he is allowed to marry her, and live with the father-in-law as if he were his own son. During the time of his servitude, he lives on the smiles of his mistress, which ought to be very benignant to enable him to endure so long the frowns of an imperious master, who never spares him from the severest labour and fatigue. Our Toyune himself assured me he had served three years for his wife under a very hard master, and that nothing but the love he bore his intended bride could have made him support it!

All the Kamtchatdales I met with were Christians of the Greek persuasion, and appeared attentive to their devotions. Their hospitality, as the reader must have already remarked, is

excessive, and it is carried to an extreme amongst themselves that becomes ridiculous. They pay one another visits, which last for a month or six weeks, until the generous host, finding his stock of provisions exhausted, is forced to give a hint to his guest to take his departure. This is managed by presenting to him at dinner a dish called *tolkootha*, a kind of olio, or hodge podge, composed of a number of meats, fish, and vegetables, all mixed together, and very difficult to prepare. It is the *dernier resort* of the master of the house, and the moment this dish is served up, the guests take the hint, and leave him the following day, without feeling in the least dissatisfied; the proceeding being understood amongst them.

I thought at first the natives of Kamtchatka were rather stupid; but I soon found they were more timid than dull, and possessed a good deal of that quickness and cunning belonging to the Asiatics generally. You do not discover a Kamtchatdale well until he has drunk a glass or two of watky. Their remarks are sometimes very clever, and exhibit good strong common sense.

The first thing a traveller must do when he arrives at a Kamtchatdale house, is to treat the

we could not have consumed less than four or five, independently of other food.

The next day proving fine and clear, we paid a second visit to the bay, and found that Karaggee Island bore by my compass south-east from the centre of it, at about thirty versts distance. This island is said to be about one hundred and fifty versts in length, and about thirty in breadth. Reindeer, black and red foxes, and wolves, are the large animals principally found on it; and there is fish and game in plenty, some good meadow grounds, and tolerably good timber. It was once well peopled with Reindeer Koraikees, and Kamtchatdales, whom the small-pox destroyed, with the exception of half a dozen families, who afterwards came and settled on the peninsula. The reindeer, left there without their masters, became wild; and the island is now well stocked with them. In the summer months the inhabitants of Karaggee, and other ostrogs in the neighbourhood, go thither to hunt and fish, and collect the teeth of the walross or sea-elephant.

My Klutchee Koyourshik being quite recovered, we bade adieu, on the 8th, to our kind host, and were about to depart; but he said, "I won't take leave of you, for I am determined

to accompany you part of your journey, and have already loaded a Sanka with baggage taken from your sledges, to render them easier to your dogs." I found it in vain to oppose him, as this was to show his gratitude for our having paid for him a few roubles he owed to government. I should have mentioned, that the Toyune of Govenskoy,* a Karaikee prince of great influence on the north coast, came hither to meet me; and I found him a very intelligent, useful, and excellent man, whom every one seemed to obey implicitly. We now formed a considerable party, and we pushed forward for Timlatee, fifty versts off, where we arrived on the night of the eighth.

Timlatee is on a river that flows from a source about sixty versts off in the Timlatsky mountains, and empties itself into a large bay close by the ostrog. At eighty versts distance, and nearly opposite to the bay, is Verkotoorskoy Island, about thirty versts in circumference, which is said to abound with foxes, hair-seals, sea-cows, otters, &c. It has very little timber, and no rivers; but there are many springs

* The Toyune of Evashka was also of our party.

which send rivulets to the sea, and which, in the summer season, are stocked with fish. Before arriving at Timlatee we perceived by the ardour and uneasiness of our dogs that there had been reindeer on the road; and on our arrival we learned that a small party of Reindeer Karaikees had encamped somewhere on the plains before us.

There had been once an ostrog at Timlatee; but now it did not deserve the name, having only one poor miserable hut, with a small poverty-stricken family: and it was not without some difficulty we all got accommodated. Our host, miserable as he appeared, produced however fish, game, and berries, for supper, and sold me a handsome new parka (of his wife's making) for tobacco, of which he was greatly in want. He was delighted when I added some articles of clothing, and a few needles for the women.

CHAPTER V.

Journey continued from Timlatee—Another violent snow-storm—Sagacity of the Sledge-dogs—Hospitable shelter—A Toyune's possessions—Killing the fatted buck — National tribute — Keecheekinskoy Ostrog — The Karaikee Prince Zachar's Ostrog of Govinskoy — Visit from an old Chief—Qualities of the Reindeer, for purposes of draught—Mode of taking them—A friend to whiskey—A trait of female character—The Sedatchee Karaikees — Respect shown to the Chiefs — Anecdote displaying the presence of mind of Prince Zachar — Further particulars respecting the Reindeer — Arrival at Vilpareskoy.

We were happy, on the 9th, to inhale the fresh air, and leave our smoky habitation at Timlatee, to pursue our journey, which now lay over a mountainous country, along the sea coast, and almost wholly bare of timber. The morning was clear and cold, but the wind blew rather fresh from the sea, and the white clouds hurried rapidly over the blue expanse.

About ten o'clock, the Toyune of Govenskoy

came to me, and said, " We must not stop at twelve o'clock to-day, as usual, to take our luncheon, as I perceive we are going to have one of those cold *poorgas* which on these plains are very violent; and we may be frozen to death, should we not chance to meet with the reindeer Karaikees. For a long distance," added he, " there is no house, or hut, or any sort of shelter: therefore order your people to push on, and keep close together; for if the Karaikees are here, they will be on the middle of the moor, but yet a considerable distance from us."

Knowing how well the natives of that country understand the weather, although I could see nothing that indicated a storm, I gave orders as he directed, and he led the way with his own dogs. These, he said, were his hunting dogs, and could be relied on. We went on quite well, and briskly, until a little before twelve o'clock, when, all of a sudden, the wind began to blow with great violence, and, drifting the snow in quantities, thickened the atmosphere so that we could not see a yard before us. For the first part of our progress, the sky above our heads was clear; but this, after a while, became covered with black clouds, and a kind of sharp sleet descended, which was borne on the wind

so violently, that we could no longer keep our faces to windward, and were obliged to stop.

As we had lost our way from the commencement, the Toyune came to me to hold a consultation as to what was to be done. I told him he was an inhabitant of the country, and must be the better judge, and I should leave it to him to decide. He said: "As it is impossible to make a fire—if we remain here, and the poorga continues all night, we shall be frozen to death: we had therefore better keep moving; but don't you give a dram to any one until I tell you; for watky is not good at such a time. I have great confidence in my dogs, and if there is a reindeer on the plain, they will find him."

After this speech, he pushed on his dogs, to take what road they liked, first giving orders to the party to watch strictly each other, and not to separate on any account. To our surprize, the dogs, instead of taking what we imagined to be the road, turned off from the sea, and brought the wind nearly on our backs. Although this alarmed many, who thought they were going wrong, they found it much more comfortable than to go against the sharp sleet that tore the skin from their faces.

We continued travelling in this manner for

upwards of two hours. The poorga raged with redoubled fury; the clouds of sleet rolled like a dark smoke over the moor, and we were all so benumbed with cold that our teeth chattered in our heads. The sleet, driven with such violence, had got into our clothes, and penetrated even under our parkas, and into our baggage, wherever there was the smallest crevice. At length, the Toyune's dogs began to snuff the air, bark loudly, and set out at full speed. It was like a shock of electricity. The rest of the dogs followed this example, and strained every nerve to keep pace with them. Our hearts now beat high; for we were sure the dogs smelt the reindeer, and this emotion had already infused a warmth through our veins, as we anticipated the happiness of finding shelter from a dreadful storm that threatened us with death. In about ten minutes more, we had the ineffable pleasure of finding ourselves near a large Karaikee Jourta, where we saw a fine fire blazing!

The Karaikees had all run out with their clubs and spears, to defend their reindeer from the dogs, which our drivers, benumbed as they were, could hardly keep from running on the herd that surrounded the Jourta. The Karaikees, who were to leeward of us, had heard the

dogs for some time, and, anticipating our arrival, had already killed a fine fat buck; and the women were skinning him when we arrived. It was some time before we could shake the snow and sleet from off us, and enjoy the comfort of shelter and a fine fire. I now administered a dram of watky (rye whiskey) to each, and the Toyune said, "This is the time to drink a glass, for should it put us to sleep, there is no danger of being frozen before such a good fire." The women engaged in skinning the deer soon finished their work, and then cut it up into several large pieces, and put them all into a large kettle to boil, which had been prepared for the purpose.

Our host was a fine hospitable old man, who possessed a herd of nearly three hundred sleek reindeer; and he seemed overjoyed to have us for guests. He made me sit down on some nice warm bear skins spread near the fire, which was in the centre of the jourta. Behind me was a place apart, well hung and lined with deer skins, for me to sleep in. As soon as the deer was boiled, a large wooden trough was placed before me, and into it were put the tongue, the heart, and one of the fattest pieces of the reindeer, as well as the marrow that had been extracted from

the bones whilst raw. I expressed my dislike to the latter in its raw state, and the old chief caused it to be boiled immediately: however, I ate of it raw afterwards, and found it well flavoured. Our host made signs to me to commence; but I would not, until I got my interpreter to tell him that I expected the Toyunes and himself to join me, for he had placed enough before me for half a dozen persons. They accepted my invitation, and I treated them with watky, and biscuit made of rye bread. The host took nothing but bread and watky during the dinner. He drank five or six glasses, which I thought would have made him drunk; but they seemed not to affect him in the least, and he drank two more after dinner without being intoxicated!

After distributing some beads, needles, knives, and tobacco, amongst the family, I was quite surprised on looking towards the door, to perceive that the poorga had ceased, and fine weather had returned. I therefore took a walk to look at the herd of deer—many of which were so tame, they came to the keepers, and suffered them to stroke their heads. Our host showed all his sledges, and every thing I wished to see about his jourta, and seemed quite happy to

gratify my curiosity. As we approached the entrance to the jourta, I observed two fine fat reindeer led up to us by two Karaikees, who held large knives in their hands; and the moment they got quite near to us, they plunged their knives into the sides of the deer, and laid them dead at our feet. The old chief immediately turned towards us, and bade my interpreter tell us that one of them was a present for me, and the other for the Toyunes who accompanied me. My interpreter, who was of Karaikee origin, found out at last that the host was a relation of his. This circumstance occasioned much joy, and was the cause of the death of another fine buck, to regale his relation.

The Toyune of Evashka being in possession of an order from Government to collect the tribute and tax from the Reindeer Karaikees in that quarter, he made the interpreter explain his powers to the other Toyune, and ask him if he was prepared to pay them. He replied, that he would pay the tribute with great cheerfulness, but he could not pay the tax in money, because he had none, nor did he know how to get it. "I wish," said he to me, "as you are going to St. Petersburg, you would tell the Emperor, that the Reindeer Karaikees, though a wild peo-

ple, are good loyal subjects, and are always ready to pay the tribute in furs, although they cannot pay him money. Our habits of life," continued he, "are such, that we never buy or sell any thing for money; how then can he expect us to find it? When I want tobacco, knives, kettles, needles, or watky, I buy them with fox, sable, and deer skins; and I know nothing farther of trade: besides, I have heard, that amongst you who trade for money, the effect often spoils the heart, and creates bad blood between man and man. I am glad, therefore, there is so little money amongst our Reindeer Karaikees, who are warm-tempered." I was struck with the full force of the reasoning of this untutored man, who convinced us also of his generosity, by the ample return he made for the few trifles I gave to himself and family. After having made this speech, which was delivered in a serious tone, he ordered a bundle of fox and sable's skins to be brought, and, throwing them at the feet of the Toyune, "There," said he, "is our tribute. Let the interpreter write me a paper, and do you sign it, to say you have received it."

This request having been complied with, and the afternoon being very fine and serene, we

deemed it best to resist the kind invitation of the Karaikee chief to pass the night with him, and proceeded on our journey, as we were now not far from an ostrog.

Late in the evening we arrived at Keecheekinskoy ostrog, that consists of only five or six large jourtas, where there are ninety to a hundred inhabitants. It is situated on the river Keecheekinska, that flows from a source in the Keecheekinskoy mountains, and falls into the sea close to the ostrog. Fish and game abound here; but there are no domesticated animals, except a few hundreds of reindeer, principally the property of the Toyune or *Knaszets*.*

We left this place, where the accommodations were not very good, and arrived at Govinskoy, (the ostrog of my friend the Karaikee Prince, Zachar, who had accompanied me), about eleven o'clock at night, where we were lodged in a subterraneous dwelling, very spacious, that belonged to the prince.

Early the next morning I was quite surprised to see our former host make his appearance on his sledge drawn by three stout bucks, and accompanied by his son and daughter. He told

* Petty prince, in the Russian language.

the interpreter to inform me, he had come to pay me a visit, to wish me a safe journey, and had brought with him a fine fat deer to serve me on the road. Unfortunately the old chief brought with him also a terrible snow-storm, that commenced with violence, and made us not only postpone our departure, but feel quite happy that we were safely sheltered from its inclemency. He boasted of the quickness with which he had arrived, having left his tent seve ral hours after us. Reindeer will certainly, for a few versts, go faster than dogs; but they require feeding often; that is to say, every twenty to thirty versts. They eat moss; and find it themselves, by scraping off the snow with their fore feet. Should the snow be deep, they not only go slowly, but very soon get tired. Dogs are more to be relied on; and if you can only obtain dried fish to feed them with, they will go from forty to fifty versts a day in the worst roads.

I found the Karaikees catch their deer after the same manner in which the natives of South America catch the wild cattle. They have a coil of thong made of the hair-seal's skin, with a running noose at the end of it, about fourteen or fifteen archins long. This they throw with

great skill over the horns of any deer they wish to pick out of the herd; and they are so expert that they very seldom miss their mark. Another method is to hold a small bowl or cup with urine in it, of which the deer are excessively fond, and they will come the moment its odour reaches them.

As the snow-storm continued, we could not think of moving; I therefore had another opportunity of treating the old chief with watky and biscuit in return for the fat reindeer. Indeed he would have eaten and drunk nothing else, had I not assured him it was unwholesome without the addition of some animal food. As he had heard my skill in curing praised, he paid strict attention to my advice, and ate heartily of whatever I offered him.

I said to him, that he must have had an unpleasant ride after the snow-storm commenced. "Oh," said he, "we are used to pourgas; and I am like a hungry dog in the spring, I always follow those who feed me well and caress me." Having now time to open my trunks, I presented his daughter with a small looking-glass, which afforded her great entertainment. She employed two or three hours in looking at herself, smiling before it, and placing it in various positions.

We were now on what is called the Aleuter's coast, where the inhabitants are called Sedatchee or fixed Karaikees, who live always in the same place; whereas the Olania or Reindeer Karaikees are always moving from one spot to another to find fresh good pasturage for their herds. I was astonished at the deference and respect paid to the pastoral chiefs by the Sedatchee Karaikees. When any one of them arrived, the reindeer were immediately untackled, and led to feed by the men of the ostrog; and when the Reindeer Karaikee entered the jourta, the people near him brushed off the snow from his parka and boots; he holding forth his leg or his arm with a seeming indifference, while the others performed their task with much assiduity. When this was done, he advanced towards the Toyune and myself, saluted us in his rough way, and seated himself without ceremony. I observed that the inmates of the jourta brushed the snow off the Reindeer Karaikees every time they went out and came back again.

The old Chief and the Toyunes all dined with me again; and I found he was as fond of pepper as he was of watky, and begged me to give him a few grains, as he said it was an excellent medicine. Our dinner was composed of

some beef-soup I had brought frozen with me from Nijna Kamtchatsk, and venison steaks well peppered; and although it was the first time in his life he had tasted beef, and that he found it very excellent, yet he preferred the steaks on account of the pepper. Indeed I found they all liked pepper exceedingly. The Reindeer Karaikees seldom eat any roast meat. Their usual method of cooking is by boiling; but they like the meat rather underdone.

As the weather became better after dinner, I told my companions that we should depart; and the old Chief began to make his preparations to quit us. When he was about to take leave, he requested the interpreter would tell me not to forget to recommend the Olania Karaikees to the Emperor, and to inform him of what he had said of the tax in money.

We had found our travelling every day become more difficult, because the spring was not far off, owing to which the dried fish for the dogs became more scarce. The poor Toyune of this place was very liberal, although he had but few fish left in his ballagan.

A circumstance occurred whilst we were at Govenskoy, that inspired me with respect for the greatness of soul, the courage, and the *sang-*

froid exhibited by my friend the Prince Zachar, and revealed to me at once the cause of the great influence he possessed over the Karaikees of that coast. My Klutchee Kyoorchiks begged of me to give them some watky to buy reindeer skin, parkas, and boots; and one of the prince's men, who had drunk rather too much of it, became quite furious. With a large knife in his hand, he sought the prince, crying out, that he was an unjust man, and he would stab him. The other Karaikees tried in vain to stop him until he had got quite near to the prince's dwelling, when he called with all his force, "Come out, Zachar, if you dare: I am prepared to kill you!" Zachar, who was quietly drinking tea with me, heard all of a sudden this extraordinary summons (and which the interpreter immediately explained to me). The prince put down his cup of tea, and, rising slowly from his seat, went out of the jourta. I followed him closely with a pair of loaded pistols, which I always kept ready in case of necessity. When he perceived that I followed him, he desired the interpreter would tell me not to interfere, as he would very soon settle the affair himself. During this time the drunken Karaikee foamed with rage, and was trying to extricate himself from

the crowd that surrounded him. Zachar, who had already thrown off his parka, now unbuttoned his shirt, exposed his breast, and ordering the crowd to stand aside, advanced boldly up to the Karaikee; and then with a terrible voice, and an undaunted countenance, he said to him, "Here is the breast of your prince; strike at it if you dare!" The Karaikee seemed thunderstruck! He raised his hand, but he was afraid to strike, and the knife fell to the ground! "Coward," said Zachar, "you have saved your life: for if you had aimed a blow at me, I would have thrown you down at the same instant, and your own knife should have drawn out your heart's blood." He then ordered his men to confine him until he should be sober, and returned with me to finish his tea. I asked him how he could be so imprudent as to expose himself to a mad drunken fellow, without any thing to defend himself? He answered with a smile, "I have more strength and courage than twenty such miserable fellows. He might have wounded me slightly in the arm through my warding off his blow; but I should have thrown him down immediately, and killed him with his own knife." I could not help admiring a man whom nature seemed to have formed to command, seeing that

he could calm so quickly the fury of a drunken savage.

When we were about to depart, the weather again became bad, and we were obliged to remain until the morning of the 11th, at which time the sun shone forth once more to cheer us with his rays. I set off with the three Toyunes, to make our way over a ridge of mountains that skirted the sea, or, rather, surrounded a very deep bay, where, the natives said, poorgas often raged, even when the weather on the moors was mild and good. We had a very fine prospect of the sea from the top of the ridge; but it was frozen for a considerable distance, and presented a very uneven surface, which, however, was rather pleasing than otherwise, after the immense moors we had traversed, without even a bush to amuse the eye. These are not, however, a useless barren waste, as they serve to support numerous herds of fine sleek reindeer, both tame and wild.

The reindeer may fairly be called the ox of these countries, and not the horse, as some people have called him. He does not possess either the noble temper or the docility of the latter animal. When the snow is deep and the roads are difficult, if the reindeer be pressed to

exert himself, he becomes restive and stubborn, and neither beating nor coaxing will move him. He will lie down, and remain in one spot for several hours, until hunger presses him forward; and if, at the second attempt, he is again embarrassed, he will lie down and perish in the snow for want of food. Reindeer consequently require a great deal of care and management, and should never be treated too roughly, or they become totally unmanageable. Besides, great attention must be paid to them in summer, and their pastures often changed, or they contract diseases, and die off very fast. The Karaikees also watch them carefully, to prevent their eating the *Mookhamor*,* or fly-killing mushroom; for if a herd once gets the taste of them, they become quite wild, and run off in all directions, wandering far and wide to search for more—so that the keeper either loses a number of them, or, if he follows them assiduously, is sometimes lost himself when they take to the forests.

A Karaikee related to me the story of a keeper whose herd was dispersed in that way, but who, by very great exertions, after four or

* Agaricus muscarius.

five days, collected them together again. However, he found he had wandered far beyond his usual haunts, and lost his way, so that he remained and roamed about with his herd nearly two years before he had the good fortune to meet with any of the Reindeer Karaikees.

The snow on the hills being very shallow and firm, we made a rapid journey over them, and arrived late in the evening seventy versts off, at a place called Vilpareskoy. It was a solitary jourta, whose inhabitants consisted of only one man, his wife, and two or three children. It was situated on a neck of land running into a large bay, that in summer abounds with sea elephants, sea lions, seals, and other sea animals, and a great quantity of fish. Our host showed me some of the elephants' teeth, which were large, and appeared to be of excellent ivory. He said he had collected a few, but that his time was mostly employed in catching fish for his winter's stock; and that if there were more inhabitants, they might get a great number.

CHAPTER VI.

Prince Zachar's advice as to the route—Departure from Vilpareskoy—Veyvinskoy — A snow-storm predicted and experienced—Uncleanly habits of the Karaikees—Singular mode of catching wild ducks—Herds of reindeer—A Tschookchee chief—Veytera—Numerous presents of venison—Remarks on the Karaikees—Crowd of Visitors—Karaikee bread—Karaikee jourtas—Vaytivay—Visit from a Toyune—Difference of character between the Karaikees and the Kamtchatdales—A ride in a reindeer sledge—White partridges—Discomforts arising from wind and snow—Virtues of tea peculiarly felt by the traveller — Course along the Kammina river —Crossing a moor—A Karaikee sorcerer—Dangers of the river Talofka in its frozen state—Arrival at Kammina.

My intention had been to pass direct from Govinskoy to Kammina over the mountains; but I was dissuaded by Zachar, the Karaikee prince, who said it was dangerous so late in the season, when the cold poorgas prevail. "Along the sea coast," said he, "although a little farther round, you now and then meet with a jourta; in the other case you meet with nothing but bleak moors and mountains for a very great distance, with not even a forest to shelter you from the

inclemency of the weather. Indeed, the number of snow-storms we had already experienced proved the accuracy of his judgement; and I felt myself fortunate in having made so valuable a friend amongst the natives, and one who also possessed a very great influence over them. We found the moors and mountains near the coast in some places almost bare of snow, where the wind swept violently over them, and indeed throughout not more than eight to ten inches deep.

It was four o'clock in the morning when we left Vilpareskoy, and we travelled even better than the day before, for we made near ninety versts by midnight, to a place named Veyvinskoy, consisting of three jourtas. These are situated on the river Veyvinskoia, that has its source near three hundred versts distant, in the Apoohkinskoy mountains. I ought to have mentioned, that we had scarcely left Vilpareskoy an hour or two, on one of the clearest and most beautiful mornings I ever beheld, when the Karaikee prince came to me, with the interpreter to explain his wishes, as he spoke the Russian but badly. "Tell him," said he, "that, although it appears so fine, I have seen the usual signs of a cold poorga; and as we have a long distance to make to the ostrog, I beg

he will now deliver some biscuit to the drivers, and when they are hungry let them eat; for I cannot consent to their stopping as usual." I complied with his wishes; but, as the whole day passed off without a snow-storm, I thought my Karaikee friend had for once at least mistaken the weather. However, when we were only a few versts from Veyvinskoy it commenced with an excessively cold wind and showers of sharp sleet, which, in the short time we were exposed to it, froze the cheeks, and cut the skin on the faces of the Kyoorshiks. We were therefore truly delighted to have been so fortunate; and the poor dogs, though apparently tired when the poorga commenced, seemed to redouble their efforts to get to a place of shelter.

The storm raged with more than ordinary fury, and continued all the 13th and 14th; we therefore felt particularly grateful to heaven for having saved us from the horrors we should have been exposed to on those wild and inhospitable moors, and for having brought us to a snug and comfortable dwelling. I say comfortable, because it was dry, warm, and much more cleanly than the dwellings generally of the Sedatchee Karaikees, which are filthy beyond description. The inhabitants usually are ex-

tremely dirty in their persons, and eat of such food as a starving civilized man would loath to touch. I have seen them eat rotten fish which had been kept under ground all winter, and of which, when the place was opened in the spring, the stench might have been smelt the distance of a verst. They ate their berries with the seal's oil, and considered the meat and fat of the hair-seals (though excessively strong) as the most delicate food. The inhabitants of Kamtchatka throughout eat those animals, and make use of their oil instead of butter, to fry fish, &c. After this description, my reader will understand that our host's jourta was clean in comparison with the dwellings of his countrymen, and not with those in other parts of the world. It had another advantage also; it was less smoky than usual. The Toyune's wife, in return for a few beads and trinkets I gave her, regaled me with reindeer's marrow and tongues.

This ostrog is close upon the sea-coast, where in summer there is a great abundance of fish and all sorts of sea animals. Two ducks were presented to me by the Toyune, as large as Muscovy ducks, and resembling them in plumage as well as in taste; being much finer than the ordidary wild ducks. He informed me, that the

Karaikees catch a great many of them with nets, which they let fall over the precipices and cliffs along the sea-coast, where those ducks sit in the cavities of the rocks. As the net falling down frightens them, they fly against it and are caught in the meshes, sometimes to the number of twenty or thirty at a time.

The weather continued extremely bad until the 15th, when we were rejoiced at beholding a glimpse of the sun, and we left Veyvinskoy to try and get near four or five tabboons * of reindeer, which, we had heard, were not far off, in order to supply ourselves with a fresh stock of venison, as ours had been greatly diminished whilst we were detained during the poorgas. We accordingly set off, and had not proceeded more than fourteen or fifteen versts when the dogs began to be uneasy, and thereby showed us that the reindeer could not be very far off. It was not long before we discovered seven or eight jourtas on the southern side of a hill a little distance from our road; and the hill itself was literally covered with herds of reindeer. As we drew somewhat nearer to them, the dogs leaped up, snuffed the air, and became so un-

* Tabboon is a Russian word for *herd*.

manageable that the Kyourshiks had the greatest difficulty to keep them in any sort of order. My interpreter said there were at least six thousand reindeer on the hill. We were just thinking of turning off to visit them, when we perceived another large herd coming towards us directly in our road; we therefore changed our intention, and determined to procure from among them what deer we should want. Our dogs now became quite ungovernable; several of them broke loose, and were with difficulty caught again; and at length, the whole party, consisting of between eighty and ninety, set out in full cry, to attack the deer. Our sledges went more swiftly than we could have wished. The reindeer seemed greatly alarmed, and huddled together behind their keepers, who with their sticks and spears kept the dogs at bay until our Kyourshiks, laying lustily about them with their ostals,* succeeded in bringing the unruly dogs to order.

This tabboon was about one thousand strong. One of the chiefs was a Tchookchee, who imme-

* *Ostal* is a large stick, crooked at the lower end, and armed with an iron point, which the Kyourshik forces into the snow and holds before the sledge when he wants to stop his dogs.

diately came to see me, and brought with him two fine fat deer; one, he said, for me, the other for my people. They were not quite as large as the deer we had seen before, but were very round and plump. The Tchookchee said he was going to encamp only two or three versts off, and invited me to spend a few days with him; but I excused myself on account of the lateness of the season, and begged him to send two more deer, and I would send him some beads and tobacco, as well as a present for what he had already so generously bestowed unasked. I had heard much of the Tchookchees, and was glad to have met with one of them. He was tall and strong-built, rather lighter-complexioned than the Karaikees, and had a more open countenance, somewhat resembling the North American Indians. The Reindeer Karaikees, on the contrary, have those very high cheek bones and small eyes, as well as those features generally by which the Tartars are distinguished; and they certainly resemble much the Northern Chinese.

Between seven and eight o'clock in the evening we got to Veytera (called Veytyak by the Karaikees), where we found only one jourta, with a family of seven or eight persons. It was

situated on a bleak open plain, about forty versts from the sea. We had hardly been an hour or two arrived, when several of the Reindeer Karaikees came to visit me, whom I treated as usual with black biscuit, tea, and watky, in return for a number of reindeer they brought me.

Another violent poorga commenced, that continued all the 16th; and we had reason again to bless our stars that we were housed. All the Toyunes, as well as the other natives, declared they had not seen so many violent snow-storms within so short a space, for many seasons: and Zachar said, "if you had gone the route you mentioned to me at first, you would never have got to Kammina."

The Toyunes of this place and Zachar's nephew were the chiefs; and they were so thankful for some beads and tobacco I gave them, that they sent me two of the fattest reindeer I had yet seen. Indeed almost every Reindeer Karaikee who came to visit me, brought a reindeer or two with him, so that I was at length so overstocked with venison that I was obliged to declare I could receive no more.

Although the snow-storm was violent, it did not prevent the Karaikees from coming one after

another, until I had at length nine of them to treat with biscuit, tea, and watky, with which they were highly pleased. The Russian peasants who came with me from Klutchee told me the Karaikees did not like tea; but I found them very fond of it; though they certainly liked the watky better. They are all very much attached to tobacco, the men being incessant smokers, while the women pound, or rather grind it into snuff, and rub it over their gums.

The women I saw were short and fat, and rather filthy in their persons; but some of them had pleasing countenances, and all appeared healthy and contented. I found the men inferior to them in appearance; and I was surprized that the Reindeer Karaikees, who lead such active lives, should be men rather undersized, and not very stoutly built. Zachar, however, who was one of their princes, was a tall athletic man, with a fine sensible countenance, and the eye of an eagle.

As my Karaikee friends kept smoking all day, I said to them that they must use an immense quantity of tobacco. They said, no; and immediately showed me the manner in which they economised it—by mixing it half and half with birch-wood shavings, which they said rather increased the strength of it, and rendered

it more agreeable. One of them begged me to give him an old leather bag, in which we had kept tobacco, and which was completely impregnated with its flavour. I complied with his request; and he said he should keep it until his smoking-tobacco was expended, when he should cut the leather bag up into pieces, and chew it.

Another party of Reindeer Karaikees now came to visit me, to the number of eleven, some of whom were from sixty to upwards of eighty years of age. Fortunately I had bread, tobacco, and watky, to treat them with; but I was obliged to accept several more reindeer than I knew what to do with. I found, on inquiry, that many of the people live to a great age. The fact is, that their mode of life generally ought to conduce to good health and longevity: they live simply and are very active.

One of the old chiefs brought me a large lump of what he called Karaikee bread. It was composed of the boiled bones of the deer, with the marrow in them, pounded very fine, and mixed with a portion of the meat and fat. It was tolerably well tasted when eaten with salt, and would have been really delicious if it had not been for a smoky flavour that almost every thing acquires which is prepared in their jourtas.

Those jourtas can be pitched or struck at pleasure like tents. They are generally from twenty-five to thirty feet in diameter, of a circular form, and composed of a number of poles from twenty to thirty feet long, forming segments from the edge of the circle, and meeting at the top in the centre, where they are bound with thongs. When they are of a larger size, these poles are supported by stanchions and cross pieces, so fitted as to be put up or taken down at a moment's warning. On the outside, the poles are covered with reindeer skins, excepting a hole that is left about the centre, immediately over the fire, to carry off the smoke. These skins after a while become so impregnated with the smoke, they turn quite black, and are impenetrable to all sorts of weather. The richer chiefs prepare the skins without the hair, and make their jourtas as warm and comfortable as a house.

There is a sort of blunt independence of character about the Reindeer Karaikees, acquired by their mode of life: and whilst sober they are good-natured and seemingly well-disposed; but when drunk they are easily offended, and, once offended, very revengeful. They are, however, vastly superior to the Sedatchee Karaikees in

every respect; and although they lead a savage life, have become attached sooner to civilized man, than their brethren who lived in villages. In the wars which the Cossacks waged against the Tchookchees, the Reindeer Karaikees were always their firm allies. Among their habits I remarked that they contrive always to have the doors of their tents to leeward; and the two segments opposite to the door belong to the chief. In all the other segments there are beds with curtains made of reindeer skins. It is astonishing how quickly they strike their tents, and march off with all their property; especially when we reflect that this labour is always performed by the women! All their property is packed up in skins, and placed in winter on sledges, and in summer on the backs of the deer; and indeed they never open those packages, excepting some particular ones, containing what they want for immediate use, or unless when they wish to expose their furs and skins for sale.

The poorga having at length abated, we continued our journey, and arrived in the afternoon at Veytervay, about thirty versts from Veytyak, where I found a Toyune, who had come from Apokhatchinskoy, (an ostrog on the north

Aleuter's coast, one hundred and fifty versts off,) from motives of curiosity to meet me. Of course I was obliged to pay every attention to him: and in the course of this I remarked, that although he had never seen a European before, and knew nothing of the customs of civilized life, he behaved with great propriety, and did not seem in the least embarrassed. Some of my trunks, which were covered with lackered leather and full of brass nails, seemed to excite his astonishment, and, indeed, proved a fund of amusement for the natives on all the road. Bets were made constantly, as to the number of nails in each trunk, and they were counted over and over a hundred times, with the greatest care. I found those Karaikees from the north coast a very good sort of people, although they have the character of being very uncivil and quarrelsome.

We had now arrived at the last Karaikee ostrog on that coast; and it became necessary to direct our course to Kammina, across the moors for two hundred and fifty versts, where there was scarcely a forest, much less a hut, to afford us shelter from the weather, should it prove bad again.

Three more Reindeer Karaikees arrived, and

tremely dirty in their persons, and eat of such food as a starving civilized man would loath to touch. I have seen them eat rotten fish which had been kept under ground all winter, and of which, when the place was opened in the spring, the stench might have been smelt the distance of a verst. They ate their berries with the seal's oil, and considered the meat and fat of the hair-seals (though excessively strong) as the most delicate food. The inhabitants of Kamtchatka throughout eat those animals, and make use of their oil instead of butter, to fry fish, &c. After this description, my reader will understand that our host's jourta was clean in comparison with the dwellings of his countrymen, and not with those in other parts of the world. It had another advantage also; it was less smoky than usual. The Toyune's wife, in return for a few beads and trinkets I gave her, regaled me with reindeer's marrow and tongues.

This ostrog is close upon the sea-coast, where in summer there is a great abundance of fish and all sorts of sea animals. Two ducks were presented to me by the Toyune, as large as Muscovy ducks, and resembling them in plumage as well as in taste; being much finer than the ordidary wild ducks. He informed me, that the

Karaikees catch a great many of them with nets, which they let fall over the precipices and cliffs along the sea-coast, where those ducks sit in the cavities of the rocks. As the net falling down frightens them, they fly against it and are caught in the meshes, sometimes to the number of twenty or thirty at a time.

The weather continued extremely bad until the 15th, when we were rejoiced at beholding a glimpse of the sun, and we left Veyvinskoy to try and get near four or five tabboons * of reindeer, which, we had heard, were not far off, in order to supply ourselves with a fresh stock of venison, as ours had been greatly diminished whilst we were detained during the poorgas. We accordingly set off, and had not proceeded more than fourteen or fifteen versts when the dogs began to be uneasy, and thereby showed us that the reindeer could not be very far off. It was not long before we discovered seven or eight jourtas on the southern side of a hill a little distance from our road; and the hill itself was literally covered with herds of reindeer. As we drew somewhat nearer to them, the dogs leaped up, snuffed the air, and became so un-

* Tabboon is a Russian word for *herd*.

dales liked you, and how well you behaved to them; and, as we have found you also kind and liberal to us, we must not be outdone by any of the natives of this country. However, the character of a Karaikee and a Kamtchatdale are very different. The former is proud and irascible, prone to revenge, and never forgets, and but rarely forgives, an injury; whereas the Kamtchatdale is mild, good, and of a temper difficult to ruffle.

As the Prince's nephew heard me say I had never ridden with reindeer, when we were about to depart he ordered, instead of my dogs, three of his fine bucks to be tackled to my kibitka, and told me he would drive me himself fourteen or fifteen versts, to show me what reindeer could do, when the snows were shallow.

Here also I separated from my friends, the Toyune of Evashka and the Prince Zachar, with real regret, for they had behaved to me with the kindness of brothers. Zachar, although a Karaikee by birth, had been much in the civilized part of the peninsula, and possessed a high-minded native courage and generosity, that raised him far above any of his countrymen I had seen. He often expressed his regret, when we were together, that he had not been able to

get into Russia, whither his curiosity had always invited him from his youth. On parting, he observed to me, "You are too late in the season; but you must do the best you can. I therefore advise you, even though the distance will be greater, to follow, as much as possible, the course of the creeks and rivers. There you will find shelter should a poorga commence; but on the moors, at this late period, it is very dangerous." I promised to follow his advice: and my young Karaikee friend giving a whistle to his bucks, they sprang off with the rapidity of lightning.

We were to go on a-head (as the reindeer and dogs could not travel together), and stop at a place fifteen versts off, for our companions to come up with us. The Karaikee urged on his deer in a masterly manner, avoiding the smallest lump or uneven surface, and we arrived in a little less than an hour at the spot appointed. The deer, however, were all in a foam, and panted violently, whilst their tongues hung out of their mouths.

It was some time before my friends with the dogs came up with us; but they at length arrived, and we continued our journey towards Kammina. The day was clear and cold; and,

the surface of the snow being well frozen, the dogs performed a good distance before night. During the day we saw many covies of partridges, white as the snow on which they sat; but I was too much in a hurry to stop and shoot at them. We passed the night near a miserable clump of bad timber, and in rather a bleak uncomfortable situation.

Early on the morning of the 19th we started again. It began to snow not long after our departure; and before mid-day the wind increased to a storm, and my guide said we should have a regular poorga. We therefore directed our course for a small creek or branch, that unites Veyvinskoia to Kammina river. We were not long before we got there, and followed its winding course, whilst its high banks defended us from the rigours of the snow-storm. After travelling in this way about an hour, we stopped to prepare our dinner, but found the wind and snow beat over the banks with such a violence that we could not keep our fire burning five minutes at a time. Many attempts were made, with such bad success, that we at length persisted no longer, and contented ourselves with eating some cold boiled venison that had fortunately been prepared the day before; and very

happy were we that my Chinese cook had been so provident. By the time we had finished our truly cold repast, which was warmed only by a glass of Russian brandy, we found it impossible to proceed any farther; and, drawing our sledges close under the windward bank of the creek, with the dogs in front, we passed the night on this dreary spot. A dismal night it was, for the snow and sleet beat in whirlwinds over the bank with unceasing violence; and it was impossible to hold one's face towards the wind for an instant. Although I slept in a kibitka that I tried to close up as tightly as possible, the snow beat into the crevices; and when I first awoke, I found myself completely covered, and with difficulty extricated myself. The dogs, sledges, and men were so entirely concealed, that I could only discern the marks where they lay; and I beat about, and trampled amongst them some time before I could rouse them. As the latter part of the night was warmer, and the snow fell in immense quantities, or rather drifted over us, we slept very warmly and comfortably.

On the 20th, the wind having abated, and the weather proving mild, we determined to set off again, first spending an hour or two in shaking the snow off our clothes, baggage, and sledges, where it was found in abundance. It was abso-

lutely necessary to depart; for not a stick of wood, nor even a twig, could we find to make a fire; and we travelled on until near eleven o'clock in the day before we arrived where there was wood enough to boil the tea-kettle. With what pleasure and satisfaction did we swallow a warm and cheering cup of tea! that delicious beverage, far exceeding every other when one is cold and weary! Ardent spirits will warm you more quickly; but their effects are not so lasting, and occasion a drowsy stupor, that makes you afterwards feel quite chilly. I therefore cautiously avoided them on those occasions; or, if I used them, it was a very small quantity, mixed with tea. It is the way-worn traveller alone who can feel, by comparison, the full force of Cowper's description of fire-side enjoyments, heightened by

"The cups which cheer, but not inebriate."

Although the snow began to fall again, the weather was milder, with very little wind; and having arrived near a small copse, that afforded us plenty of wood, we kept up a rousing fire, and passed the night of the 20th more comfortably.

We renewed our journey on the 21st; but it it was still snowing, and the weather, having

become warm, rendered our progress slow; the soft deep snow being fatiguing both for men and dogs. As the weather towards evening became colder and the wind increased, we left the moor, fearful of another storm, and directed our course for a branch of Kammina river. Here we continued rather than expose ourselves on the plains; and had the good fortune to arrive at a small forest that sheltered us from the weather; but still we had some trouble to keep our fire burning, and prepare our suppers.

On the 22d the wind blew keen and cold, driving the snow and sleet furiously over a moor which lay before us after we had quitted the river, and which it was absolutely necessary to traverse. Fortunately this course turned our backs to the wind; and although my guide stated that the moor was nearly forty versts wide, and comprised the most dangerous part of our journey, should the storm continue, I concluded it was better to attempt crossing it, as the wind was fair, than to stay in one spot awaiting fine weather, and consume all our provisions. Our dried fish for the dogs was also nearly expended; and although he said there was not a bush on the moor to light a fire, I told him I thought it much worse to perish with

hunger than with cold. He acquiesced in my opinion, and we started off before a sweeping storm, that drove the snow around us in clouds like smoke. However, the dogs seemed sprightly, and pushed forward vigorously; and, to our great joy, in the afternoon the sun shone out clear; but the wind blew hard and cold. We got to a place in the evening where there was barely wood enough (and that we scraped up from under the snow) to boil our kettle and prepare our supper; so that we passed rather an uncomfortable night.

On the 23d we set off, and got again on Kammina river, whose high and mountainous banks in many parts screened us from a cold and piercing wind. We soon arrived at a large rock, where our guide told me there was a cave, (formerly the residence of a celebrated Karaikee shaman, or sorcerer), which, he said, if we were to pass without leaving something with the conjuror's shade, we should certainly be unfortunate. The moment we came opposite to the rock, the party stopped, and the Karaikees, to a man, even those who professed to be Christains, went and left a pinch of snuff, a leaf of tobacco, a pipe, or something or other, as an offering. Not far from this we passed the night; and

although we had plenty of wood, the wind blew in such keen blasts from the mountains, we could hardly keep ourselves warm.

On the 24th by nine o'clock, we arrived at the river Talofka, only five or six versts from Kammina ostrog. This river is about an English mile in width, and so rapid it does not freeze until very late in the season; but when it congeals, the ice is thrown up in rude broken heaps, resembling a bed of crystal rocks. The passing of it, therefore, is then not only difficult, but often very dangerous. There is another river, called Pengin, that empties itself into the Ochotstk sea not far from this, and gives its name to the gulf. Its source is in the Annaderskoy mountains; and that of the river Talofka is in the Apokhatchinskoy mountains. After breaking two or three of our sledges, and wounding some of our dogs, in passing over the rough crags of ice, we arrived at Kammina in the afternoon.

CHAPTER VII.

Toyune of Kammina—Precautions necessary against the Inhabitants—The starosta, or head man, of Klutchee, a useful companion on the road—Comparison between the Tchookchees and the Sedatchee Karaikees—A meeting with two Cossacks—Fatigue of the travelling-dogs—Arrival at the ostrog of Parrennia—Imposition practised by the natives—Party of Cossacks—Continued weariness of the dogs—Scantiness of provisions—Canine sagacity—Arrival at Igiga—Its poverty of situation and resources—Poisonous species of whale—Author's excursions around Igiga—Difficulties preceding departure—A wholesale slaughter of rein-deer—A Tchookchee conjuror—Remarks on Igiga.

As the Karaikee prince of Kammina was absent, we could form no conjecture what sort of an arrangement was likely to be made with these wild and unruly fellows, who are all pagans, and a very different sort of people from those of Kamtchatka and the Aleuter's coast. Besides, several travellers had passed but a short time before me, and left but very few dogs or fish in the place. On the 25th the Toyune,

or Prince, as they called him, returned, and we soon perceived he was an impudent, drunken scoundrel, who would give us no satisfactory answer. However, after drinking several drams, as well as treating all his friends to our watky, he at last declared he could not promise us more than thirteen dogs. These would have been only enough to draw *my* kibitka; so that we were quite at a loss what to do.

Kammina ostrog is composed of about fifty or sixty jourtas, with between two and three hundred inhabitants; but they are such lazy people, they are always out of fish before the spring arrives. Indeed, when they have them, they always pretend to be in want of food, in order to impose on travellers, and make them pay the dearer for what they want. Should any one object to their terms, they quarrel with him, and either beat him, or cut him with their knives, if he be unarmed and unable to defend himself.

In the evening the Prince coaxed us to give him a bottle of watky, with the assurance, that on the morrow all the dogs we wanted should be ready for us; but, when the morning came, not a dog or driver was to be seen; and he excused himself by saying, that his people were

headstrong and would not obey him, and that we must now make a bargain with them ourselves. On commencing negociations, we found them not only very exorbitant in their demands, but excessively rude, and inclined to take from us by force what they perceived we were not inclined to give. It was a fortunate circumstance that I had brought with me from Klutchee the head man, or Starosta, with seven stout Russian peasants. The former, who had been several times amongst them, was known for his undaunted courage, and a temper that would not easily brook their impertinence. At a signal agreed upon previously between us, he called all our party around me, when I threw off the cover of my sledge and exposed to view four fowling pieces and two brace of pistols, all prepared for their reception; added to which, our party were all as well armed with knives as the Karaikees. On perceiving our preparations, those who were so warm and impudent went off and left us; and, not long after, the Prince came to us, to say they did not want to quarrel, and only begged us to comply with the usual custom. After an amicable explanation, as they called it, I found them still very exorbitant, but consented to the terms sooner than

suffer farther detention, and be obliged, perhaps, to shoot some of them.

The Starosta and one of his peasants, seeing the difficulties I had to encounter, at length agreed to accompany me five hundred versts farther to Igiga. I now therefore knew the exact number of dogs I should want; but I was obliged to pay one hundred and forty hands of tobacco before they could be had, and twenty more to the drivers. All this time the Prince looked on as if delighted to see us hand out the last leaf, and at the close of the business had the impudence to ask for some liquor for having assisted to procure us dogs. I gave him some watky, but told him I was not pleased with his conduct. Although the matter now appeared settled, we were almost on the point of coming to blows twice before we could make those move who engaged to furnish us dogs; and if it had not been for the arrival of a party of Tchookchees, who immediately came to see me and took our part, we should have had a serious affair, and have been obliged to shed blood in our own defence.

The Tchookchee Chief, to whom I gave some beads, &c. brought me two fine reindeer and a moose's head, which is considered by them, and justly, a great delicacy. Those peo-

ple are far superior to the Karaikees, and, although close traders, always keep their word, and are besides both brave and generous. One single Tchookchee always considers himself a match for six or seven Karaikees; and the latter are much afraid of them. They also are greatly reduced in numbers, and the whole Tchookchee population from the river Anadir to Behring's Straits does not actually amount to more than five or six hundred souls. My interpreter, who spoke their language, questioned them for me concerning the trade they carried on with the American coast. They said that their people went in bidaroos * to the islands in the straits, and that the islanders traded with the opposite coast, and through them they obtained the American furs.

As soon as the Karaikees saw that the Tchookchees were friendly with us and began to expostulate with them, they became as obsequious as possible. Indeed the Tchookchee Chief did more; he expressed his displeasure at their conduct in warm terms, saying, "these people are not traders; they are travellers, and entitled to the more hospitality;" and turning to

* A species of large canoes, formed of a strong but light frame of wood, covered with the skin of the walross, or sea elephant.

the interpreter, he said, "but, you know, we consider these Karaikees as *women*."

In a short time the dogs were ready, and to my great joy we departed. Shortly after leaving the ostrog, we came to a steep hill that I was obliged to mount on foot, for the dogs had become very weak, owing to the scanty manner in which we were obliged to feed them. On descending the hill we met a trader from Igiga, who informed us for our comfort, that a scarcity of fish prevailed at that place; that a great number of dogs had died off in consequence; and that I should find it difficult to get to Ochotsk on the winter roads. Towards evening, when we were about thinking of stopping for the night, we perceived two Cossacks with their sledges drawn near to a fine fire; and as the place was well sheltered by trees, we halted and joined them.

We started early the following morning, and about twelve o'clock arrived at three miserable jourtas, inhabited by about fifteen to twenty Karaikees. Here we met another Russian trader, who, when he was questioned how we were likely to be treated at Parrennia, the next large ostrog between us and Igiga, said we should find it very little better than Kam-

mina. Having very little tobacco left, no watky, and nothing to serve instead of them, we were quite at a loss to conjecture how we should manage with those people. However, we pushed on again, and after passing at some distance three more jourtas of Karaikees, we encamped for the night on a cold and bleak moor, in preference to inhabiting the filthy subterraneous jourtas of those treacherous rascals.

On the 28th we started at daylight, but our dogs were so miserably weak that we did not arrive at Parrennia until seven in the evening. My Kyourshik was a fine smart young man, who often ran alongside of the dogs and encouraged them; and, as he complained that his father had taken the whole twenty hands of tobacco to himself, I made him a present of some beads, which he said he wanted for his intended bride.

Parrennia is an ostrog nearly as large as Kammina, and almost as well peopled. The Toyune gave us such a hospitable reception that I began to think what the trader told me was false. He made very fair promises overnight, when I retired to my sledge to sleep with our party, as the Starosta told me by no means to trust myself in one of their jourtas.

We were thus all well prepared, and passed, if not a comfortable night, at least one free from disturbance. It appears the Kammina Kyourshiks had related the impositions of their townsmen; and these good folks were determined to follow their example. When the morning of the 29th came, I expected to set out at an early hour, but not a dog was to be seen, and we were informed that they would not let us have any unless we gave them as much tobacco as we gave to the people of Kammina. One of my Klutchee peasants also got alarmed at the bad accounts from Igiga, and refused to go any farther. However, after much persuasion, we prevailed on the peasant to lend us some of his dogs, the Starosta promising faithfully to bring them back to him. Notwithstanding this, I found our forces so diminished (as I could only get sixteen dogs from the Karaikees) that it became necessary to leave a portion of my baggage behind me. I was obliged to pay eight sables down, and the rest in tobacco at Igiga, for sixteen miserable dogs. Our own dogs were almost starving; yet I could not prevail on those hard-hearted wretches to sell me a single fish. My interpreter therefore said, if I would take with me the most valuable

part of my property, he would stay with the remainder until I could send for it from Igiga. He assured me, at the same time, there was no danger of my baggage, or for him; since these Karaikees, said he, "know that I am related to the Reindeer Karaikee chiefs, who pass here frequently; and they dare not offer any violence to me, for fear of having it repaid to them tenfold."

Matters being thus arranged, we left those rapacious villains with more than ordinary pleasure; and, as it was late in the day, and the dogs weak, we only made a few versts before we stopped to pass the night. It was near a small copse, on the banks of Parrennia river, thinly skirted with trees—a novel sight, that made the scene more cheerful, for we had been travelling for a long time over extensive moors without a shrub, where the fatigued eye saw no confine, and was lost in the immensity of unvaried space. On the plains between Parrennia and Igiga there were formerly a large number of Reindeer Karaikees, with their herds; but the bad conduct of the commandant and the people of the latter place disgusted them, and they have now deserted them altogether. Part of them went to the Tchookchee side, some to the Aleu-

ters coast, and the remainder to the coast of Tigil. It was bad policy to quarrel with such useful neighbours; for Igiga has scarcely any other resource, there being very few cattle there, and the fish by no means abundant. The only reindeer near them now are a few herds at Toigonoss, and two or three small ones at Nyakonna. My poor dogs were so weak I was obliged to share my meat and biscuit with them, the famished condition of those poor indefatigable animals being truly deplorable.

The following morning was quite warm: our dogs therefore were hardly able to raise a trot; and those we got at Parrennia did not seem much stronger. Yet the two Parrennia Karaikees who drove them were such unfeeling wretches, they constantly sat on their sledges, although they saw all the rest of the party on snow-shoes. I was obliged to threaten to flog them before I could make them follow our example. "Here I am the strongest," said I, "and if you do not obey us we will immediately punish you." After this they were more cautious, and, whenever they saw us walk, they walked also.

In the afternoon we met the Commissary, who was accompanied by ten or twelve Cossacks,

going to the Tchookchee fair, for the protection of the Igiga traders. I made a complaint to him of the treatment I had received, and the necessity of leaving my baggage. He expressed his regret at not being able to give me some fish, as he had a journey before him, and rather a small supply; "but," said he, "you will certainly get to Igiga to morrow; and as for your baggage, my Cossacks shall bring it to you on their return." Our dogs now had only half a fish each daily, and were become quite feeble: I therefore stopped early to give them a longer time to rest, although the place was so bleak and devoid of bushes that we with difficulty scraped up from under the snow a few old rotten sticks of the scrub pine, to boil our kettle.

The morning of the 31st proving clear and cold, our dogs went on in a manner that surprised me until mid-day, when the heat overcame them, and two of my best dropped down with fatigue. However, on giving them some cold meat and biscuit, they recovered so far as to be able to follow us. These dogs had come with me all the way from Klutchee; and I was determined to preserve them, if possible. Myself and servants went on our snow-shoes, and we put the dogs on our sledges. At last, how-

ever, the day became so hot, and the snow so soft, the poor animals all came to a full stop. Indeed, we were ourselves not a little tired, as walking on snow-shoes in soft wet snow is fatiguing work; and, although stripped to our shirts, it made us perspire freely.

Our dried fish being now entirely expended, we were forced to feed our dogs on reindeer meat and biscuits, of which we had but a very small stock left. It was therefore but a trifling portion we could give to each; but it refreshed and strengthened them, so that I was enabled to dispatch the Starosta, whose dogs were the strongest, to Igiga, to beg the Commandant would send us assistance and food. By six o'clock p. m. our dogs also seemed much recruited; and when the sun descended, the night proving cold enough to harden the surface of the snow, we ventured to continue our journey. I was truly surprized to see the ardour with which those poor miserable animals pushed forward, insomuch that by nine at night we met not far from Igiga the reinforcement of fresh dogs sent by the Commandant to meet us. Nothing could exceed the joy of our dogs on perceiving those from Igiga. They sprang into the air, barked aloud, and set forward with such eagerness to

meet them, it was impossible to restrain them. When they came up to them, they jumped upon them, and licked and fawned upon them, with an expression of pleasure and satisfaction which it was impossible to mistake. We approached the town: it was utterly impossible to hold them back; they set off at full speed, and if it had not been for the assistance of several of the inhabitants, who ran and caught hold of them, or threw themselves on the sledges, they would have upset us, and broken every thing to pieces!

In a short time I had arrived at the house where I was to take up my quarters — not a little pleased to find myself in a civilized place, after the filth, smoke, treachery, and villainy of the Sedatchee Karaikees of Kammina and Parrennia, who, I must do them the justice to say, were the most rapacious barbarians I ever saw, although I have seen the savages of many parts of the globe. After a calm and quiet night's rest, (the first I had experienced since we left Veytyak,) I rose in the morning quite refreshed, and went to pay my respects to the Commandant. He quieted my fears concerning the baggage, by assuring me that, if the cossacks did not arrive soon, he would endeavour, badly as

they were off for food on the road, to send for it. He also advised me to hire the Reindeer Karaikees of Nyakonna to carry my baggage to that place, which was ninety versts on the road to Ochotsk.

Igiga had been in very great distress for food; and if it had not been for the humane and generous disposition of the Reindeer Karaikees, who sent the Commandant from time to time supplies of reindeer, the inhabitants must have starved — for their stock of flour was likewise almost exhausted. The river affords but few fish; and the inhabitants, who have been nourished by the Reindeer Karaikees for many years, do not exert themselves during the summer season. Laziness and improvidence, even in a better country, might produce want; but here it seems inevitable.

The situation of Igiga has nothing to recommend it. There are a few meadows; and, certainly, plenty of cattle might be reared there: but this also seems too much labour for those indolent people, who have but a small number of cows. The sea, about the mouth of the river, is impeded by sand-banks, which not only make the navigation difficult, but perhaps likewise prevent the fish from running into it. Farther

along the coast, about thirty to forty versts, there is a bay that would be much safer for the transports, as well as more suitable for a settlement.

There are none of the fish here which are found on the coasts of the North Pacific Ocean, such as cod-fish, flounders, herrings, &c. which are caught, however, in plenty about the Kurile Islands. Whales, hair-seals, sea-lions, and other sea animals, abound, however, on the coasts of the Ochotsk sea. The flesh of these animals, to eat often, is not wholesome; and at Igiga they have had two or three times diseases occasioned by using it. There is a species of whale, the natives said, sometimes thrown upon the coast, which is absolutely poisonous, and which the birds and beasts of prey never touch. They also mentioned that there was another species, the oil of which, almost immediately after the fish is eaten, is absorbed from the stomach, and passes out at all the pores so abundantly, as to spoil the clothes. If eaten in any quantity, it produces at last severe griping, convulsions, and fever.

I was very happy in having made soup of the moose's head given me by the Tchookchees, which I froze and preserved until my arrival;

for I found the reindeer meat very poor and bad. As these animals eat nothing but moss all the winter, they are not so fat after the month of March begins, and in April they are quite thin; for at that time they have worms in the skin. About the same period they generate worms in the first stomach, having the appearance of a grub, only rather darker-coloured and larger. They cough them up, and throw them out at the nose. During the summer they feed on grass, or brouze on the small bushes; their flesh, consequently, is best in autumn, or in the early part of the winter.

I made frequent excursions about Igiga on snow-shoes, and on sankas or sledges; but I never could find any game; nor was even a crow to be seen, except when enticed by the death of some unfortunate dog. Magpies seemed the only birds that attached themselves to that miserable spot: these seem so fond of the haunts of man that they never forsake him. The reader will observe that this is the only part of Siberia I have stigmatized with the appellation of miserable: and it is but justice to say, that from Kammina to Toomannee there cannot be a more wretched district, if you deprive it of the Reindeer Karaikees; for it is

almost entirely composed of immense plains or moors covered with moss, and having scarcely any wood. I allude to the country lying along the sea-coast.

On the 10th of the month, three Reindeer Karaikees and two Toomannee men who had dogs at Nyakonna, agreed to carry my baggage to that place, and to kill fifteen head of reindeer to feed my dogs, for two pounds of tobacco, ten bottles of watky, and thirteen roubles in money. At the same time I hired some of the Cossacks of the place to go to Parrennia and bring up the baggage I had left there with the interpreter; and I thought myself now in a fair way to get on the road again.

The weather continued very fine until the evening of the 12th; and on the 13th there was a severe snow-storm. This gave us some uneasiness on account of the Cossacks; for should they be on one of those large moors and lose their way (where not a stick is to be found to light a fire), and the storm continue, they must perish with cold and hunger.

On the 15th one of the Cossacks returned, having lost a dog, while the rest were too weak to continue their journey. This was a sore disappointment to me, who wished to be off from this

dismal, half-starved place, where drunkenness seemed the only amusement, or rather consolation, the inhabitants enjoyed. They were now put all to short allowance of flour and meat; yet to the watky, notwithstanding, they stuck. On the 20th of April, however, there was great rejoicing, the Commandant having received a present from some Tchookchee and Karaikee Reindeer men of five hundred head of reindeer. I was invited to go and see them killed; I should rather say murdered. The poor animals were driven into an enclosure, made purposely, about the height of a man; and many persons were stationed on the outside at different parts of it. An opening was left at one end, where the deer were driven in; and a crowd of assailants with clubs and spears immediately attacked them, whilst others guarded the entrance. As soon as the deer perceived themselves surrounded and assailed on all sides, a number of them darted furiously amongst the men that guarded the entrance, and made their escape. The reindeer, when angry, strikes with his fore-feet, which being nearly as large as an ox's, and cloven, besides being well armed with horn, give a very severe blow. Several men were hurt by those which escaped; the hunters, however, followed

them with their rifles, and shot them. It took a whole day to complete the work of destruction; and the Tchookchees said they could have done it much more quietly and quickly.

Amongst the Tchookchees was a shaman, or conjuror. He was a young man apparently about twenty-eight or thirty years old, tall, well made, with a lively countenance, and a pair of penetrating small black eyes, completely indicative of his profession. His hair hung in many little plaits all round his head; and a number of large beads of various colours were strung about the plaits, and pushed close up to his scull. He wore a dress like a parka, ornamented with bunches of hair and leather strings, bits of carved bone and wood, skins of animals, dried and stuffed, &c. all curiously arranged. I was anxious to see him perform his incantations; and indeed he promised to exhibit; but in the mean while some persons made him drunk, and he continued so until my departure. The Karaikee shamans, when they are called upon to exert their skill, eat of the mushroom called moohkamor or *agaricus muscarius*, which immediately throws them into a phrenzy, and they literally foam at the mouth whilst uttering their cabalistical words, which are always carefully re-

membered by the hearers, and explained afterwards by the magician when his fit is over.

Igiga is situated in north latitude 63° 30m, east longitude from St. Petersburgh 130°, and from Greenwich 160°; and although to the northward of Yakutsk, its situation near the sea renders the climate much milder. It had at that time about one hundred houses, and nine hundred inhabitants; but has since, in consequence of sickness, famine, &c. been much reduced in population.

CHAPTER VIII.

Route continued from Igiga—Numerical force of the party—Exchange no robbery—Inflammation of the eyes occasioned to the Author by the reflection of the sun from the snow—Karamandash—Drunken Karaikees—Nyakonna—An adventure there—River Audonee—Warm springs—Voracity of the Cossack guides—Shooting excursion to the sea-coast—Marrow of the reindeer a luxury—Shortness of provisions on the road—Postman conveying the mail—Softness of the snow an impediment to travelling—Crossing a mountain—Travelling virtues of the dogs—Toomannee—Author parts with his Cossack guides—Situation of Toomannee—Its drunken Toyune—A skilful sledge-driver—River Tackyam—Speculation on the migration of wild-fowl—Encounter with a bear—Arrival at Yamsk—Character of the neighbouring inhabitants.

At length my baggage was brought to me in safety; and on the 24th the Cossacks, with their dogs and sledges, who agreed to accompany me, being all ready, we departed. As I had but seven half-starved dogs, I took a light sledge, and putting on my snow shoes, determined to conduct it myself, in order to make it

lighter. Our party consisted of eight sledges, each drawn by seven or nine dogs; and we had only four small reindeer to serve us and them for food during a jonrney of ninety versts to Nyakonna. I had not made two versts before I perceived that my dogs were the worst in the party; and as the day was warm, and the Commandant said he would send a packet of letters which were not then ready, to overtake me, I went slowly on; and at length stopped in a small copse to pass the night. About two o'clock in the morning the packet arrived; and, perceiving the fellow who brought it had some good dogs, I told him I must have a pair of them. He said the Commandant had charged him not to part with any of his dogs. I told him I did not believe him; and, laying hold of the dogs, took them from him by force. When he found it in vain to resist, he confessed that they were his own, and asked me to pay for them. With this request I complied, giving him twenty-five roubles, and he went off well satisfied with his bargain—for he said he had scarcely any food left to feed them.

On the 25th we started again; but the weather was warm and the snow soft; so that I was all the time obliged to walk, and suffered much

fatigue. As the day advanced, the heat became oppressive; and, after ascending a small hill, our dogs came to a full stop, and could go no farther. I had overheated myself, and caught a cold, which, added to the reflection of the sun from the surface of the snow, produced an inflammation in my eyes so extremely painful I could hardly see to conduct my sledge. To remain on a wild uninhabited plain with our small stock of provisions would have been imprudent. I therefore, sick as I was, set off with my party (through a thick mist that hung over the moor), and with difficulty kept them together, as they had some watky amongst them, and had made rather too free with it. After the most painful and fatiguing time, we arrived about six in the evening at a place called Karamandash, only a few versts from Nyakonna, where we found the old Karaikee, according to his promise, had hung up for us in the jourta some reindeer meat, which was very acceptable, we having nothing left for supper. I immediately dispatched a messenger to let him know of our arrival, and to request him to come and sell us some reindeer to serve us till we could get to Studonee river, where there was another taboon, and where we could obtain a fresh supply. Having

made a small tent at Igiga, and being fearful the smoke of the jourta would increase the inflammation of my eyes, which ran a stream of scalding tears, I ordered it to be pitched, and inhabited it in preference. The only medicines I had left proved very useful ones, namely, cream of tartar, and sulphate of zinc. Of the former I made a cooling beverage, with rice-water, of which I drank plentifully; and of the latter I made a weak solution to wash my eyes.

Two or three hours after our arrival, two Reindeer Karaikees came to us; and, after a tiresome negociation, they at length agreed, for two jugs of watky, to deliver us the following day, or whenever I should be well enough to go to their jourtas, six good reindeer.

My eyes were now so inflamed I was quite blind; and the Karaikees, having got drunk with the watky we gave them, pestered me so all night that I did not get a wink of sleep. I continued the application of the solution of zinc, and drank freely of my cream of tartar beverage, which so relieved me that by the 27th in the afternoon I placed myself in a covered sledge and proceeded to Nyakonna, the residence of the Karaikees. The old chief, who had promised three deer, had his all ready; but,

as the others did not come according to promise, I sent my Cossacks in search of them. My eyes being now so far recovered that I could see tolerably well, I went out to endeavour to strike a new bargain with the old man, whose herd was rather small, for five more deer, as they were absolutely necessary to enable us to continue our journey. I offered him beads, a chinese sword, trinkets, needles, &c. which I had got ready, together with liquor and tobacco. After listening for some time to the offers we made him, he smiled, and said, "These are pretty things, but I am an old man, and dislike such baubles. My great delight is to smoke, and, now and then, when I can buy liquor, to get heartily drunk; therefore you shall have the reindeer for watky and tobacco. I want nothing else." Our bargain, consequently, was quickly finished, and the reindeer delivered to us. My Cossack guide, who was a little of a rogue, said the watky was too strong; and, although I told him not to touch it, but give it them pure, he, against my orders, weakened it with water; and this circumstance had like to have caused a very serious misunderstanding. I was sitting alone, the Cossack and my servants having gone out of the tent; and, fortunately,

I had just been cleaning my pistols and reloading them. The old fellow not finding himself as drunk as he had a right to be, and as he thought he was the day before from the same quantity of liquor, said he was cheated, and became outrageous; and he, and two of his companions, entered my tent with their knives drawn, in a threatening manner, telling me in bad Russian that I imposed bad liquor upon them. The pistols were already in my hands, and cocked; I therefore raised them, and said to them, without moving from my seat, "The first man that advances a step farther I shall shoot immediately." They were so thunderstruck with this reception that they immediately fell on their knees; and, my Cossack and servants coming in at the same instant, I caused them to be disarmed, and said that when my other Cossacks came, they should be well flogged. The old chief now was so alarmed as to become sober; he begged pardon a thousand times, and at last I accepted his apology (after knowing the trick played by the Cossack), and made him a present of another jug of strong liquor—with which he was soon heartily drunk. His daughter, and the women about him, then rolled him in a deer-skin, tied him fast, and put him away

for the night. On the following morning the fumes of the watky rose to the old chief's head, and he was again troublesome, when I ordered my man to treat him with four or five glasses of strong rum I had, which put him to rest for the day.

My Cossacks returned unsuccessful; but they said if I would move off for a few versts, and leave them half a jug of watky, they would engage to get from the chief's men some seal's fat that we saw there, and also some more reindeer. I readily complied with their proposal, and, moving on a few versts to the spot pointed out, encamped there for the night. Just as I was going to bed my men arrived, bringing with them some reindeer and a quantity of seal's fat, and saying that they had left the old man and all his party most gloriously drunk. This good news made me sleep more contentedly, having now a stock of twelve deer, and some seal's fat for the dogs, which would last us until we could arrive at Studonee river, where there there was another party of Reindeer Karaikees.

We set out early on the 29th and found the weather too warm; for, the moment the sun shone, the dogs became unable to travel. I

therefore determined to sleep during the heat of the day, and travel in the evening and at night, when the surface of the snow was generally frozen so as to bear the dogs and allow the sledges to slip over it easily. This arrangement also suited well the state of my eyes, which were as yet so weak that I found the reflection of the sun upon the snow rather increase their discomposure.

We remained on the spot where the dogs stopt until six in the evening, when we continued our route along the banks of the Studonee river.

During the night the dogs performed so well, that by nine o'clock a. m. on the 13th we were within sight of the sea, or rather I should say of the ice that covered it.

The river Studonee runs for about fifty versts between two ridges of mountains, which in some parts approach so near, on either side, as to leave but a narrow path on the banks, though, when within eight or ten versts of the sea, the space widens, and the river divides itself into three or four branches, to water a considerable extent of meadow land. Just before we entered the valley, we came to the warm springs, well known to persons who have travelled here.

They gush from the side of a steep hill, and form a small rivulet that joins Studonee river. One of my Chinese who wished to wash himself was the first to go to the rivulet; but he no sooner touched the water than he ran off quite alarmed, to come and tell me that it was hot. I found it much more than tepid; and my guide, who had been there the last winter, said it was then so hot, they could not keep their hands in it for an instant. The water had a chalybeate taste, and a strong smell of sulphur and rotten eggs. Here we saw several white partridges, and I had the good fortune to kill three or four.

Our Cossacks had been so liberal in feeding themselves and the dogs, that we had but a very scanty portion left of reindeer's meat; and what made this the more unpleasant was, that when we encamped in the valley, we were not able to discover a jourta or any signs whatever of the Reindeer Karaikees, said to inhabit that part of the country. My Cossack guide had acknowledged to me at Igiga, that he had only been once before on that road, last winter. I therefore hired one of the Sedatchee Karaikees of Karamandash, to accompany me. He being an active young lad, with a good rifle which he

knew how to manage well, I furnished him with a stock of ammunition, and dispatched him immediately to try if he could not kill a seal or some game. Some of the Cossacks were sent in another direction, to see if they could find the Reindeer men.

These Cossacks were such terrible consumers of animal food, besides their being obliged also to give the dogs a good portion to keep up their strength, that my stock was exhausted twenty-four hours at least sooner than I expected. It was now one o'clock p. m. when the Cossacks returned unsuccessful, and the Karaikee not making his appearance, I armed myself with my double-barrelled gun, and giving a rifle to my Cossack, we set off on our snow-shoes direct for the sea-coast, which did not appear more than three versts distant. We found it, however, at least six versts, and, what with the softness and depth of the snow, and the heat of the sun, were heartily tired ere we got there. We had the mortification also to find the sea frozen out as far as the eye could reach, and not an opening any where to be seen.

Near one of the branches of the river I shot a partridge, and afterwards a duck on the same branch. These, with two reindeers' tongues

and some tea and biscuits, would serve for a supper for us all, but we should have had nothing for our dogs or ourselves the following day. Whilst I was reflecting on the unpleasant situation of our affairs, I kept walking along the coast, and had made not more than a couple of versts farther when I perceived, at a distance from us, something sticking up on end like the posts of some old ballagan. I said to the Cossack, "Let us continue on and see what those posts are; perhaps there are some inhabitants near them." On approaching nearer, we discovered them to be the bones of a whale, which, as the Karaikees use them in the spring for shoeing their sledges,* they had stuck up to dry and preserve them. The reader will readily conceive our joy, when, on going to examine them, we saw the fresh tracks of the reindeer and sledges which had been there but the day before, from all appearance. I therefore sent the Cossack immediately on their track, directing him, the moment he discovered the jourta, to return to the tent and let us know where it was

* Indeed the Kamtchatdales and all the natives of those countries use bone runners in the spring, when the snow is soft, which they say slip through it much more easily than wood.

situated; and I made my way back as quickly as the heat of the sun and the depth of the snow would permit; but not without great fatigue.

About fifteen minutes after my return, the Cossack arrived, having discovered the jourta behind the mountain opposite to our tent, only about three versts off. Great joy now beamed upon the before long and serious faces of the party; and, furnishing the Cossacks with guns, powder, and ball, together with thirty hands of tobacco, I sent them to demand the reindeer already paid for at Igiga, and to buy an ample stock to serve us all the way to Toomannee. "Pay well," said I, "for what you buy; but do not come away without a good supply."

At nine o'clock a. m. on the 1st of May, the young Karaikee returned quite tired and hungry, having walked out a considerable distance on the ice, and not seen a single animal of any description the whole time. In the afternoon the Cossacks arrived, bringing with them the four deer paid for before, and eight more in exchange for the things I sent by them. Two of the Karaikees accompanied them, who brought me a bag of seals' fat, requesting I would give them some powder and lead for it. I complied

with their request, and added a couple of flints and steels, with a dram or two of watky; and they went off quite delighted with their bargain. We thanked our stars and the whale's-bones which had been stuck up by the Karaikees, as we should otherwise have been in a starving condition. There were thirteen men with me, who were all rapacious flesh-eaters; besides our having to feed sixty-seven dogs. The reader will consequently form some judgment of the anxiety I felt in a country destitute of game, except a few white partridges which inhabit the copses, and are very wild and difficult to shoot in the spring.

The rest of the afternoon was employed in taking the skins from the deer, and cutting them up, so as to render them convenient to carry. It proved not only an amusement but a feast for the Cossacks, when I ordered the heads, legs, and offal, to be consumed by the dogs and themselves on the spot. They sucked the brains raw, as well as the juice from the joints, and ate the sinews in the same state, so that it was difficult to determine which of the two were the more ravenous—the dogs or the men. I kept the tongues and the thigh bones for my own use; for I found the marrow, when boiled, as

delicate as fresh butter; and the tongues were a luxury not always to be had in the civilized world.

In the evening we commenced our journey towards Toomannee. My sledge was in front, my Chinese in the centre, and my Cossack guide in the rear. This arrangement became necessary, to prevent any of the party stopping, or taking any of the provisions without orders; as part of the meat was boiled, and the Igiga people were such hungry fellows, they would eat all our stock in one day, if permitted.

We arrived now near some mountains which bound that part of the sea-coast; and were obliged to make our way round them in order to get into the direct road to Toomannee. By eight o'clock on the 2nd of May, after following the windings of the small river Hachinna, we got again on the sea-coast, and encamped for the day, having made between sixty and seventy versts. In spite of the strict watch we kept, some hungry fellow stole a portion of the boiled meat. I therefore called them all before me, and declared that I now should pass over this first offence, but the next one should be punished severely; and that no one of the party had a right to touch the provisions but at the

stated times of eating, when every one should have a full allowance. They were in fact a miserable set of fellows, lazy, disobedient, and affrighted at the smallest difficulty; but their appetites never failed them, and they seemed never happy but when eating.

Fearful lest the reader should imagine they are the descendants of those brave fellows who conquered Siberia, I must beg to undeceive him, and to inform him they are a race between the Russians and Karaikees, who have been taken into the service as Cossacks, because the colour of their skins and their high cheek-bones led to that selection.

In spite of the canine appetites of my party, I felt less inquietude than before, since my guide assured me we could arrive in two days more at Toomannee, where there was food in plenty.

On the night of the 2nd we were again obliged to make our road round a mountain that lined the coast; and, early on the morning of the 3rd we met a postman with two sledges, who was conducting the mail from Ochotsk to Igiga and Kamtchatka. He was a foolish talkative fellow, and told a long history to the Cossacks of the scarcity of fish and food at Toomannee and Yamsk, which alarmed them

exceedingly. I was at length obliged to break off the conversation, by telling them I did not believe a tenth part of what he related, and ordering them to proceed without farther delay.

By nine o'clock a. m. the sun became so hot, and the snow so soft, that we found it necessary to encamp. Although the postman's story was exaggerated, and embellished to suit the gaping fellows who questioned him, I could not divert myself of the anxiety it created, supposing only a small part of it to be true; and it evidently made my party very serious. However, after a good hearty breakfast, and a dram each, they seemed to cheer up, and forgot what had been related to them. I told them to be less voracious, and put their trust in God, who had already given us proofs of his interposition in our favour; and that all would go right and properly.

After breakfast, I found my Chinese cook seized with an inflammation in his eyes, resembling what I had experienced myself. I therefore treated him in the same manner, with cream of tartar inwardly, and a weak solution of the white vitriol to wash his eyes; and in four days he recovered. Indeed, during our journey, several of the party were affected in this way, the reflection of the sun from the snow being

very strong and painful to the eyes. My remedy, however, cured them all.

About six o'clock in the evening we departed again; and, having a steep ridge of mountains to cross, the Cossacks prayed for a light night. The highest of the ridge, called Villeginskoy Khrebet, is the one that is generally crossed, and we did not get to its summit until near two o'clock in the morning. A thick mist lay upon it, that frightened those timid fellows, and they wanted to remain there until the sun rose to disperse it; but I insisted on proceeding, assuring them they would find the atmosphere clearer as they descended, for, at that season of the year, in calm weather, the vapours which rise after the heat of the day, rest on the mountain-tops, whilst lower down there is not a cloud to be seen. This proved to be the case here, though we did not accomplish our descent without some difficulty as well as danger, and were obliged to lash sharp stakes to the runners of the sledges, to prevent them from sliding down too fast, and killing our dogs.

After getting safe over the mountain, we continued our route on a river, running through a deep chasm, between two ridges of mountains as high as those we passed: and the lowland at

their bases offered us the novel sight of a strip of fine poplar and spruce trees. As we had not seen any thing but a copse since our departure from Nyakonna, this proved a very agreeable sight, and relieved the eye from the continued sameness of prospect that had wearied it beyond measure.

Our party now proceeded on with such spirit, that by nine o'clock on the 4th of May we had made such a large portion of the distance as left no room to doubt of our arriving early the following morning at Toomannee. The food of our dogs, which we were obliged to feed well, in order to keep up their strength, was so far expended, that I was obliged to give them a portion of the meat set apart for ourselves, so as to make their allowance sufficient for that day. I could not but feel thankful to these poor animals for conveying us so well, and on a sparing allowance, through that dreary country. Their extreme docility, and aptitude for supporting great fatigue on a slender allowance, was well proved; and, in fact, as they go lightly over the snows, they are vastly superior to the reindeer where the snow is deep.

We encamped this day in a small valley which we entered, near a rivulet, and found

ourselves closely surrounded on all sides by a rampart of steep mountains, apparently without an opening through which we might depart again. After a refreshing sleep, however, we found our way out by following the course of the rivulet through a chasm by which it forced its way between the mountains on the opposite side. We ascended gradually until we arrived at its source, which was on the summit of a very high mountain. It was fortunate that we arrived there before night, for the descent on the opposite side was so steep and dangerous, that, although we tied stakes as before to our runners, it required our utmost exertions to keep the sledges from falling on the dogs. In spite of our best endeavours, one of them went down so rapidly as to fall on the animals, and killed one of them on the spot. We esteemed ourselves fortunate that none of us were maimed or killed.

By nine o'clock on the 5th we arrived at Toomannee: and the first thing I remarked on arriving was a group of fine fat dogs, such as we had seen no where since we left the North coast of Kamtchatka. On questioning the Toyune, and promising him watky and tobacco, I was assured that he would furnish me that very evening with as many dogs as I wanted, and like-

wise with a stock of dried fish, to serve for the road from Yamsk to Towisk. He said he thought I might easily arrive at Towisk with dogs; but from thence to Ochotsk I should be obliged to go with the Reindeer Tongusees. This, although not as pleasant news as I could have wished, did not certainly correspond with the frightful story of famine, &c. that the lying postman told us. Perceiving the good disposition of the people I had to deal with, I ordered a liberal quantity of watky and tobacco to be given to them, who, without our asking them, had already turned up the sledges, and new shod with whalebone those which had been broken or injured by the road.

I here discharged the Igiga Cossacks, well pleased to get rid of such a thoughtless, undisciplined set, who were indeed so improvident that, if not strictly watched, they would eat all the food they had in one day, although starvation should await them the next. I found, on examining my account, that I had killed upwards of forty deer, since my arrival at Igiga, to feed them and their dogs.

Toomannee is situated close on the sea-coast, at the mouth of the river Toomannee, and abounds with fish, hair-seals, game, &c.—and

formerly large quantities of fish, in times of scarcity, used to be sent from thence to Igiga or to Yamsk. Now, they say, they sometimes experience themselves a scarcity; fish of late years not having been so plentiful as formerly. Toomannee consists of five or six jourtas, peopled with Sedatchee Karaikees, men and women, to the number of forty or fifty; but the males only amounted to about eighteen, and most of them boys.

In a short time after our arrival, the Toyune of Toomannee, to whom I gave watky for dogs, was completely drunk; and, although he could scarcely speak to give his orders, yet he recollected his promise, and the dogs were all prepared by six in the evening, when we set out towards Yamsk.

On setting off, I was not a little annoyed at perceiving my driver was drunk; and in the course of five or six versts he overturned the sledge several times. He was the only *man* of the attendants, all the other drivers being boys from eleven to eighteen years of age. Notwithstanding these mishaps, I perceived that he was a most good-natured fellow, and really an expert driver. I therefore bore all patiently; and ere we had been an hour on the road, he got quite sober again. Our way led over a pretty

steep ascent, where he was obliged to walk, and the perspiring freely seemed to chase away the fumes of the liquor. He soon convinced me of his skill in driving down the mountain, and over a large arm of the sea, on the ice, which we were obliged to pass, and where the rough and uneven surface made it difficult to pick our way.

The Toomannee dogs were fat and in high spirits, and went over the snow with a swiftness we had no where experienced since we left the Aleuter's coast; while the boys who drove them exhibited much more skill and courage than the Igiga Cossacks.

My two Chinese who had been now for a long time accustomed to go slowly, at first could not keep their seats on the sledges, and fell off several times, to the great amusement of the Karaikees, who sometimes let them run a considerable distance before they stopped to take them on the sledge again. At length they became so fatigued, I was obliged to order the boys to wait for them, and be more cautious in driving.

Not long after this we halted; and, at six o'clock on the evening of the 6th again pursued our journey; and although the weather was warm and the snow soft, our dogs went off at a trot, and conti-

nued at a good pace all the night. By eight o'clock on the 7th we arrived at the mouth of the river Tackyam, where we found a jourta, and a family of six or seven persons. The host, when he heard us say we should wish to have another sledge and dogs, proposed to accompany us, without making any conditions whatever. I therefore gave him watky, tobacco, beads, powder and ball, as much as I thought ample payment for his sledges and dogs. But he proved a man of nice conscience, and insisted on giving me fifty squirrel skins, as he said I had greatly overpaid him; and I was forced to accept of them.

I was delighted with the smart active Toomannee boys, and not less so with their parents, who had taught them at that early age to conduct sledges, hunt, and render themselves useful. The old Kyourshik assured me the youngest of the boys who were with me had already killed several seals, and shot a bear only the day before we arrived, although he was but ten years of age.

Whilst we were talking, he pulled a rag out of his pocket, in which he had carefully envelloped three or four small iron shot. "Tell me," said he, "you who have come so far and seen so

many different countries,—to what people do these iron shot belong, which I found in the breast of a goose I killed last spring?" On examining them, and showing them to my Chinese, we were all of opinion they were from China, or Japan, the only nations I know who make use of iron shot to shoot birds. It would appear from this, that the water-fowl, which winter in China or Japan, return to the north-eastern parts of Siberia to breed in the spring!

After our arrival at the jourta it began to snow, and the weather became damp, warm, and disagreeable. My driver said that, as the snow was soft, we had better commence our journey at six o'clock, for the dogs could not go fast. He requested, besides, that I would get my guns ready; for some bears had lately robbed their ballagans, which were about three versts off, of the seal's fat they kept there; and it was generally in such weather they made their appearance.

All our guns being prepared, we departed; but the snow was so deep and soft, our dogs with difficulty raised a trot now and then; and all the drivers walked on their snow-shoes to relieve them. When we approached the sea-coast, and not far from the ballagans the Ka-

raikees had told us of, we observed the dogs began to snuff the air, and become very uneasy; when, all of a sudden, a bear of a large size crossed our road, and made for a forest not far off, at full speed. My dogs, being the foremost, pursued him immediately (as, indeed, did all the rest), and soon brought me within shot of him, as he was about to enter the woods. I fired my rifle, and placed a bullet in his ham, just below the hip-bone. This made him limp, and, stopping all at once, he turned furiously round upon the dogs, which frightened them and made them turn back from him, so as to prevent my firing a second time. However, the other dogs coming up, he again made off through the woods at full gallop, although one leg appeared much injured, and the snow was up to his belly at every step. The whole pack, amounting to seventy or eighty dogs, seemed to make light of their sledges, and followed him in full cry. Some got entangled in the trees; others broke out of their harness; and a third set overturned their sledge; so that never was there more fun and confusion at any hunt! The skill and strength of my driver, who was an athletic man, nearly six feet high, kept my dogs clear of the trees until within about a hundred

yards of the bear, who had now laid down with fatigue. Two of our drivers having guns, and being on snow-shoes, went within about fifty yards of him, and tried to fire; but having fallen in the snow two or three times, they wetted their guns, and could not get them to go off. As I had no snow-shoes, I was obliged to get my driver and another to assist me to walk up within shot of the bear, who, I perceived, had now set himself upon his haunches, and, foaming with rage, was only waiting to recover his breath in order to make an attack on the young Karaikee before him. He tried in vain to fire his gun; but I had the good fortune to come up within forty yards of the animal's side, just as he raised himself on his legs to commence his attack; and I put a bullet through his lungs that caused him to roll over on his back in an instant, to the great joy of all the party. However, they would not let me go near him; nor would they approach him themselves until I had fired another bullet into his head; "for," said they, "a bear is not to be trusted; as long as he has a spark of life in him, he will use his paws." The eldest Karaikee then went with me up to the bear, and, pulling out his knife,

stuck the point in his eyes before the others began to skin him. As the flesh of these animals is excellent food for dogs, the Karaikees cut it off from the bones, and placed it on their sledges. In taking the skin from one of the thighs, my driver discovered an old wound, from which he extracted the iron head of an arrow, with a small piece of the wood affixed to it. He was surprised, on examining it, to perceive that it was one he had set in the bear's path the autumn before, and lost, by its not hitting the animal in the right place. * The natives set a bow and arrow, with a trigger affixed to it, and a string placed across the path frequented by the bears, and so contrived, that when an animal touches the string, the arrow strikes him in the side, and often pierces the heart or the lungs. He is either killed on the spot, or receives such a severe wound that they can track him by the blood, and shoot him.

So much time was lost by our sport and killing the bear, that we did not get far during the night. Instead of going first, as I had done

* His bow had been set at least one hundred versts from where we killed the bear.

previously, I now stayed behind the party to relieve our dogs; for they had beat the road for a considerable time. This was rather unlucky; for in the mean while two bears crossed our road, which the Karaikees did not fire at because their rifles were wet; and so they made their escape.

We encamped early on the morning of the 8th, all being quite tired, and determined to repose ourselves for some time longer than usual; feeling assured that a few hours' travelling in the evening would bring us safely to Yamsk.

After a refreshing sleep we started again in the evening, and arrived before midnight at Yamsk. The under-officer, who had the command here, was absent; but his wife assured me every thing should be arranged for my departure on the following evening. I received here many presents of ducks, reindeers' tongues, berries, &c. and my hostess, who had a nice comfortable little dwelling, treated me with the greatest kindness and hospitality.

It afforded me pleasure to see the Karaikees of this side the Ochotsk sea much less fond of liquor, and more addicted to tea-drinking, than those of the other coast. Indeed they appeared

to be a different race of men altogether, being mild, active, and hospitable,—and very moderate in all their demands. Dram-drinking makes many of the natives of Kamtchatka poor as rats, and as devoid of principle as of property.

CHAPTER IX.

Situation of Yamsk — Journey continued — Excursion over a mountain—Expeditious descent—Accident occurring to the Author and the driver of his sledge—Peculiar benefit of sleep to the traveller—River Seglan—Passage on the ice to the sea—Prevalence of snow—Village, river, and bay of Aula—Civil host—Prosecution of the journey along the sea-coast — Mode of catching seals practised by the Tongusees—Ostrog of Arman—Lamoots, or Tongusee Reindeer men—Arrival at Towisk—Detention by a snow-storm—Difficulties of the route—Active habits of the Tongusees—A tremendous cliff—Advantage of snow-shoes—Absconding of several of the Author's attendants—Pusillanimity of the Cossack guide—Scantiness of provisions—Author's suspicions as to the Cossack.

YAMSK, situated on the river Yamsk, about ten versts from the sea, consists of fifteen houses, with forty to fifty inhabitants; half of them Russians and the rest Karaikees. We had now got into a country rather mountainous, but covered with fine forests of larch, where there is plenty of moss, and where the Lamoots* and

* Lamoots are the Wild Reindeer Tongusees, who seldom inhabit one spot more than a month or two at a time.

Tongusee Reindeer men feed their herds in winter. In summer these migrate, for the purpose of fishing, to Toomannee, and even to the rivers far beyond. Within a few years past some of the Lamoots have made their appearance on the coast of Tigil in Kamtchatka. I found the people of Yamsk were equally active and kind with those of Toomannee; and they immediately examined and shod the sledges with bone, without being ordered.

Every thing being now ready, I bade adieu to my kind hostess, and set forward about seven in the evening towards Towisk. Though I had always heard that the Tongusees were a mild well-disposed people, I did not yet relish the idea of changing my mode of travelling, having already experienced, even in the worst of roads, and when almost bare of food, the indefatigable temper of the dogs. Hitherto they had conducted us in safety, and I felt attached to them. Moreover those treacherous savages at Kammina certainly gave us an opportunity of trying them.

The night proved frosty, and hardened the snow, so that our dogs went merrily on, and performed a round distance before eight o'clock on the morning of the tenth, when, coming near

some high mountains, and the sun shining forth, I concluded it best to pitch our tent until the evening. Breakfast finished, and not feeling inclined to sleep, I walked to the foot of one of the nearest mountains, which was very steep; but, as it appeared in several spots bare of snow, I thought it would be easy to climb to the summit, and have a fine prospect of the surrounding country. After much fatigue in getting to what I thought was the highest part, I discovered another spot higher, and so on for two or three times; until at length I was quite tired, having walked and climbed for two hours before accomplishing our object. At last I found myself on the summit of the highest of six mountains, which formed a large semicircle, offering on one side an extensive view of the sea, and on the other hills, rivers, forests, and valleys, in perfect panorama; and, though covered with snow in most parts, forming altogether an enchanting view, lighted as it was by a most brilliant sun and an unclouded sky. As the mountain itself had no particular attraction, after feasting my eyes on this delightful prospect, I thought myself amply repaid for my fatigue, and prepared to descend to my tent, that looked like a small speck on the snow.

I had only walked a few yards, over a part of the mountain that was bare of snow, when I was alarmed by discovering near me a heap of fresh bear's dung; but, as the ground was covered with moss, I could see none of the tracks, and therefore could form no conjecture as to what course the animal had taken. My situation was by no means agreeable, as I had left my tent without my gun, or even a stick to defend myself. It immediately occurred to me that the safer mode would be to return to the snow-covered side of the mountain, where the tracks would be easily seen, and where also I could slide quickly down the steep. This I did, and accomplished a descent in twenty minutes, over a space which it had cost me two hours to ascend. When I related to the natives what I had seen, they said it was dangerous to go on those mountains in the spring, when bare of snow, as the bears often came from their dens to sun themselves on the moss. This circumstance induced me ever after not to move a step without my gun.

The Yamsk drivers proved quite as active and indefatigable as the Toomannee people; and, the afternoon being cool, they were all ready to start at 5 p. m. on the 10th. Our

passage over the mountain was made with a rapidity that surprised me; but the Toyune, who accompanied me himself, said he feared we should experience some difficulty in the valleys, where, at that time, the small rivers and rivulets were free from ice, and, being swelled by the thawing of the snows, could not be passed without the trouble of making bridges. After descending from the mountains, we had not made more than three or four versts before we found his observation verified; and we were obliged to construct a bridge of trees and bushes to get our sledges over a creek that impeded our passage.

The way now became woody, and very uneven. Our dogs were fat and strong; and, my driver being rather an elderly man, found his strength insufficient to manage them, when a covey of partridges, or a black cock, rose up before them. Whilst we were in the thickest part of a forest, all of a sudden a fox started up from under the brush-wood, and the dogs immediately started after him at full speed. My driver's strength being exhausted, he was unable to guide them any longer, and at length they dashed the sledge and overturned it against a tree, bruised the old man's thigh in a terrible

manner, and occasioned to me a slight contusion,—I thanking my good stars that they had not broken my neck! Two of them broke loose from the sledge, and it was some time before we could catch them again.

My large and best rifle had the back-stock shattered to pieces, which rendered it unfit for service.

We now met with several places quite bare of snow, and others covered deeply with water; and in fact altogether such bad travelling, through woods and marshes, that we became excessively fatigued, and happy to stop early on the morning of the 11th, to eat our breakfast, and recruit our strength with a refreshing sleep.

A traveller can go through great fatigue on little food, but he cannot do without a good portion of sound sleep, whether his fare be plentiful or not. This balm of human woe is absolutely necessary to repair the ravages which anxiety and fatigue make upon the mind and body of a travelling man. I have observed also that it was not when I slept longest that I felt most refreshed, but when my sleep was sound and undisturbed, though it were of much shorter duration.

Having entered a fine forest of larch and

spruce, free of underwood, we pitched our tents on a smooth moss-covered spot, entirely bare of snow, and which the Lamoots had apparently occupied but a day or two before. I found all my drivers had reindeer meat of their own, independently of the stock I provided for them. This proved them to be provident travellers; and they said the reindeer men in their neighbourhood always furnished them whenever an emergency required.

After refreshing ourselves amply, we left our encampment towards evening to traverse another large tract of low woody and marshy country, and to pass the river Seglan, as well as some lesser streams, which lay in our road. Indeed, in the spring, when the snows begin to thaw, every hollow or ravine makes a rivulet.

It was near midnight when we arrived at the Seglan, which was perfectly free of ice, rapid, about knee-deep at the place where we forded it, and near a quarter of a verst wide. The drivers were obliged to unload the sledges, and carry the baggage over on their backs. This cost much time and fatigue; nor had we been long on our road again, before our course was arrested by another stream, which, although

deeper than Seglan, was narrow,—and we carried the sledges over without unloading them. It is but justice to say, that I never met more hardy, good-natured, indefatigable people than these, who were not afraid to wet their feet, like the gentlemen Cossacks of Igiga. The latter, indeed, would have adandoned every thing sooner than expose their precious persons.

After going through a thick swamp, some versts in extent, and some large forests, we descended a small river on the ice to the sea. We then crossed on the ice an immense bay, bounded by very steep mountains, and were happy to enter the woods on the opposite side, where we found a little shelter from a snow-storm that had just commenced, and that made the day cold, dreary, and uncomfortable. We were disappointed exceedingly when we searched in vain for a convenient place to pitch our tent in; and at length stopped near a thick copse, close by an open rivulet. Here the snow was so deep that, after we had made our fire, it sank down near four feet before it got to the ground. I had given my people a dram or two during the night, when taking the baggage across the river; and I now again ordered them another allowance, for which they expressed their

thanks, and seemed quite merry, in spite of the storm.

It snowed during all the 12th; but having become almost calm in the evening, we continued our journey, crossed several mountains, and made a considerable distance by six o'clock in the morning of the 13th. Finding the wind much increased, and the snow drifting in clouds, I thought it best to stop, my driver assuring me we were only thirty versts from a Tongusee settlement called Aula, where they meant to change dogs. We therefore rested and refreshed ourselves until the afternoon, when we set off again; and our dogs, although they appeared tired in the morning, now went off in a brisk trot, and seemed full of life and spirits.

We soon passed over two or three mountains, and at length got into a flat country again, where the snow was quite shallow, and some places perfectly bare. As we were passing through a forest again, a fox started up before my dogs, and, although my driver was a stout young man, he could not hold them. Fortunately for us, they took their course between two trees, which stood so close together that the sledges got jammed, and were thus stopped suddenly. My driver's leg was slightly bruised, and we thought

ourselves lucky to have escaped thus. Shortly after leaving the forest, we had the pleasure of arriving at Aula, a village of Sedatchee* Tongusees, composed of six or seven jourtas, and forty to fifty inhabitants, and situated at the mouth of the river Aula, that empties itself into a bay of the same name.

The inhabitants of this place are all Christians, speak the Russian language, and seem a very kind, decent, well-behaved people. Our host had a jourta, built in a circular form, something like those on the Aleuter's coast, having a chimney and a fire-place, after the Yakut manner, in the centre of one of the rooms, and being lighted by six small windows. Chairs, tables, tea-cups and saucers, were novel sights to see, in such a place; and altogether it was a clean and comfortable dwelling. There were several cows and horses; the latter, I was told, belonged to government, and were for the use of the post in summer.

My host treated me with some very nice milk, a great rarity, we not having tasted any since we left Igiga; and he likewise made me a present of three wild ducks, and two large pieces

* Those who live constantly in one place.

of beef. I took care to repay him, in tea, sugar, watky, and tobacco, and some little trinkets for his family. After taking a cup of tea, I went out to examine the situation of the place, which appeared to be very good, in relation to fish and game. Indeed, I then saw many flocks of ducks and geese, flying; a circumstance that warned me of the rapid approach of spring, and of the necessity to quicken my pace as much as possible.

We were off again on the 14th, by three o'clock in the morning, directing our course on the ice, across a large bay, and then along the sea-coast; but we were obliged to quit that line, in order to cross a mountain that impeded our way. After getting over the mountain, we went on the ice to traverse another bay of considerable extent; but we had scarcely got half across ere we found the ice broken up, and floating about, and were obliged to return to the shore. We now proceeded on a narrow strip of ice that remained attached to the base of a steep, rugged cliff, in many places barely admitting the passage of a single sledge. After taking off the dogs, I was even then often fearful, in spite of our best care that some of the sledges and men would have slipped from the shelving ice

into the sea. Having passed those dangerous spots, we found the ice thrown up in large heaps along the coast, which, concealing us, enabled me frequently to get so near to the ducks, that I shot several of them without getting off my sledge. I also shot two young seals. We then met a party of Tongusees, who had several seals; and on inquiring how they took them, I found it was with a spear, lashed to the end of several poles, tied well together, which they pushed over the ice very gently, and speared them as they lay asleep. To kill a seal with a bullet, it is absolutely necessary to hit him in the head or in the heart, though even in the latter case they are sometimes known to get off the ice, though at a distance from the water. When shot in the head, they never move from the spot.

By five in the afternoon we arrived at another Tongusee ostrog, called Arman, situated close to the sea at the mouth of a river of the same name, and composed of seven or eight jourtas with upwards of thirty inhabitants. Here I met two of the Lamoots, or Tongusee reindeer men. These uncivilized beings wander about Siberia with their herds. They are the greatest pedestrians in the world, very swift, and

can go longer without food than any other race of men. They are small of stature, light, active, and indefatigable. These two men appeared much milder than the Karaikees: one of them, who was the chief, for five hands of tobacco, and two strings of beads, gave me a fine fat reindeer,—remaining much pleased with his bargain, and not asking for liquor.

We remained at Arman till three o'clock in the morning of the 15th. The morning was foggy, with a light breeze from the sea, setting the ice close in along shore; and it spoiled the sport of shooting from my sledge, which I otherwise should have enjoyed, in travelling along the coast.

Towards the afternoon, however, I killed four young seals; and, shortly after, arrived at Towisk, where I learnt the unpleasant news, that I could get no more dogs. The Starosta assured me there was very little food for them in the place, besides its being much too late in the season to venture with dogs, lest the snow should melt away, and oblige them to walk back. Finding, from his account, there was no other mode left, I begged him to send for the Tongusee Reindeer men, that we might arrange with them for

conducting us, and, if possible, depart that evening.

Towisk is a village with a couple of houses, four or five jourtas, and thirty or forty inhabitants, Yakuts and Cossacks mixed. It is situated a few versts from the sea, on a branch of the large river Cawva. Although apparently a fine stream, I am told the river Towisk is oftentimes, like Yamsk, badly off for fish; and travellers are sometimes obliged, even in the height of the season, to travel with reindeer, not being able to procure food for dogs.

I had been here but a short time, when a party of Tongusees arrived, and agreed to take me a hundred versts; informing me at the same time, they could not bring their deer to the village, and that I must get myself and baggage conveyed by dogs to their jourtas, about six versts off. With this I complied; and the Starosta lending me his assistance, we were very soon transported to the spot, where there were five jourtas and a very large herd of deer. I kept two sledges, one for myself, and the other for my Chinese, who, I was afraid, would not be able to ride very well on those animals, which are much more difficult to manage than a horse. Independently of the road allowance

in money, I gave these people twelve hands of tobacco, some watky, and trinkets of various kinds, for which they seemed exceedingly thankful, and prepared every thing for our departure by the following morning.

In the night, a violent snow-storm came on; and the tent being badly secured, we had great difficulty to prevent it from being blown away, by placing our baggage on the side exposed to the wind. The snow-storm continued all the 16th, the weather rather warm; and the snow, melting as it fell, wetted every thing as much as if it had rained, and obliged us to remain until the 17th. Although the jourtas were so near, I preferred, even in this bad weather, inhabiting my tent; the former being exceedingly filthy and smoky.

On the morning of the fifth* we set out with twenty-two head of reindeer; two to each of my servants' sledges, three to mine, and the rest employed to carry our baggage. The Cossack and guide rode also; the latter was a Sedat-

* Russian style. This is twelve days behind the modern style; I adopted it at this place, fearful of making a mistake in my dates, which could not happen, when keeping them in the same manner as the inhabitants of the country where I was travelling.

chee Karaikee, whom I had hired to speak the Tongusee lauguage for us, and who lived in a small village, called Amokthon, that lay but a few versts out of our way. My Cossack was entirely ignorant of what he had to perform, was a careless fellow into the bargain, and never had travelled that road save once before. In short, he was totally unfit for what he was recommended to me for by the Commandant of Igiga.

In passing a large extent of low grounds, the depth and softness of the snow made the deer sink up to their bellies, and tired them so, they could scarcely drag one leg after the other. For the latter part of the day I was obliged to have recourse to my snow-shoes, until we arrived at the nearest ridge of mountains, where there was good moss to be had.

We pitched our tent about six o'clock in the evening; and, early on the morning of the 6th renewed our journey. I found these people active, persevering, and obliging: they would often carry part of the baggage themselves, whenever they found a deer tired; and performed every sort of service with cheerfulness. We had another large body of low grounds to pass ere we got to the sea again. The snow

having a slight frozen crust on the top, the animals drawing the sledges did not sink through, but accomplished it very readily; we waited, however, till near two in the afternoon before the other deer, loaded with the baggage, that sunk through at every step, came up with us—those indefatigable fellows, the drivers, carrying a portion of the baggage on their own backs a considerable distance.

They were now convinced that what I proposed at Towisk would have been much the better plan, namely, to put all the baggage on sledges, which the deer would have been able to draw without sinking through the surface. I observed that many of the Tongusees, even when the roads were good, walked in preference to riding; and would continue the whole day through, without apparently suffering much fatigue. They are all men of small stature, slightly made, and resembling the Northern Chinese in features. Their countenances, generally, are indicative of a tractable, mild, disposition, and bear a strong Asiatic cast of character, which is indeed found amongst all the natives throughout Siberia.

We got to the sea over a bay, on the ice, by eight in the evening, and encamped at the foot

of some mountains, which afforded moss for the deer.

On the 7th our drivers were occupied until six o'clock, collecting their deer. This I regretted much, as we had large bodies of low ground to pass, deeply covered with snow, ere we could get to a small ridge of mountains, where food might be again procured. We were all obliged to put on our snow-shoes before eleven o'clock, the deer sinking every step to their bellies; and they were soon so overcome with fatigue, that they frequently lay down. It was not without great difficulty we got them to the spot where we wished to stop for the night, although but ten or twelve versts distant. The other deer, with the baggage and our provisions, did not arrive until late in the evening; this annoyed our hungry stomachs not a little, we having eaten nothing since the morning.

We got off early on the 8th; and, although the surface of the snow was still soft, I found we got forward much better than on the day before. Travellers in this country during the spring should always take advantage of the night; indeed the sun in the day being excessively hot, shining upon you for fourteen hours, and thawing a deep snow, is sufficient to prove the ad-

vantage of travelling by night. A tedious spring day, in a high northern latitude, with a hot sun reflected from the glassy surface of an immense snow-covered plain, entirely destitute of trees, not only inflames the eyes, but creates a lassitude of the body and mind. When obliged to walk also, as we were, a journey under these circumstances is one of the most fatiguing and painful I ever endured. After a most tiresome time, like that of the day before, and having preceded our companions by many versts, we found ourselves, by two in the afternoon, on the summit of a mountain, from whence we had a fine prospect of the sea. Two deep bays presented themselves, one on either side, where we saw the ice floating; and the hills and mountains about them seemed almost bare of snow.

My driver now informed me we were not far from the jourta, where we should be provided with fresh deer; but, as the ice was broken up in the bays, he thought it exceedingly probable the Tongusees had repaired thither to kill seals and wild fowl. He therefore requested I would remain with my guide on the mountain, whilst he would make an excursion to the sea coast, and see if he could discover them. He returned, mounted on a reindeer, about

three or four in the afternoon, just at the moment the baggage arrived; informing me the people he sought for were behind the mountain, within a few versts of us. As the descent was steep and dangerous, he had requested some of them to be ready to assist in the descending. On arriving at the spot in question, the reindeer were taken from my sledge, and, having two men standing on the runners, and two to guide it, we went down safely, though with extreme rapidity, aud by five o'clock in the evening were at the jourta. One of the Tongusee hunters had just returned with a mountain sheep (at the moment of our arrival), part of which I procured, but I found it not so fat and delicate as that which I had tasted on the peninsula of Kamtchatka.* We were obliged to proceed some distance farther along the coast the following day, before we could get fresh deer;—these people being a small party only, sent from the tabboon for the purpose of hunting.

On the 9th we set out about ten o'clock, continuing our way round a tremendous cliff of

* Perhaps because it was killed in the spring, the time when those animals are always poorer than at any other season.

craggy rocks, impending over our heads as if just ready to be loosened from their hold. It was not a pleasing sensation to pass under those frowning heaps, one fragment of which would have instantly consigned the whole party to eternity; more especially, as we were told it often happened at this season of the year, that very large pieces were disengaged and fell into the sea. During the day I killed three young seals.

About two p. m. we arrived at the tabboon, where the Tongusees, to whom I had given the seals' flesh, consumed it all at one meal; not even excepting the entrails and fat. This astonished me, as even the Karaikees, who are the foulest feeders in the world, do not generally eat the entrails of sea-animals; though they will eat fish that has been kept under ground all the winter, and stinks so intolerably it is impossible to remain in the house while they are eating it.

We changed our deer, and set out again on the 10th of May, with a set of drivers very different from those that had quitted us. They were indolent, good-for-nothing fellows, who seemed little anxious about proceeding quickly; and in short, at the very first glance I was convinced they were a bad set, that would detain

May 10
1813
O S
See p.
203

me on the road. I was obliged to walk every day, and my eyes became so weak again, it was necessary to wear a piece of black gauze over them to prevent another inflammation.

We stopped near some pine bushes to pass the night, and on the 11th set out again; but so late, owing to the laziness of my drivers, that we lost all the advantage of the night's frost, and had, as usual, infinite difficulty in getting the deer through the snow. Indeed we found them not nearly so fat and strong as the former. Having killed some deer for my journey before we left the tabboon, my cook boiled down the feet to a jelly, which we preserved in some little birch vessels, in case of emergency.

We had now a plain to cross of about a hundred versts in length, and about twenty versts in breadth, bounded on either side by steep mountains. Here the snow, which we frequently fathomed, was often four, and never less than three arshins deep; a measurement equal to from seven to nine English feet.

We got away early on the 12th of May, and took care to move briskly, the surface being frozen, and still strong enough to bear the deer. The guide directed his course towards the centre of the plain, from an idea that when the

snow became soft, we should find it not so deep there as close under the mountains. However, it proved the contrary; and we were not a little alarmed at the fearful distance that lay between us and the only places where we could procure food for our deer, now scarcely able to crawl, either by driving or coaxing. Although I beat the road myself for them, on snow-shoes, they plunged in so deeply as to be obliged to stop and lie down every ten or twelve yards, panting for breath. My Karaikee interpreter, with one of the Tongusees, drew the sledge after them; and about one o'clock in the day we were all so worn down, we were obliged to rest ourselves. To add to our disappointment, the nearest mountain appeared yet a considerable distance off. After a while, the driver said we must continue our journey, and force the deer on in the best way we could; for, if they remained twenty or thirty hours more without food, they would be too weak to proceed at all, and must perish in the snow. Indeed I was well aware of the danger, and was prepared to walk as long as I had a sinew to support my tired limbs. Having been every day since I left Towisk on snow-shoes, I became a practised pedestrian in this way; nor found myself inferior

to the natives of the country. In fact, without the snow-shoes I should have been like a man in the middle of the ocean, who knew not how to swim, and was without even a chip to save him from drowning. It was impossible to drive through such snows, when a deer with the greatest difficulty carried a small portion of baggage, and when that oftentimes was obliged to be taken from his back, to enable him to extricate himself. I had taken care also to teach my servants to walk in snow-shoes whilst in Kamtchatka.

After an hour's rest, we pushed on again, perceiving three or four rows of trees, intersecting the valley like hedges, between us and the mountains. On passing these we found another and another row, until we were almost disheartened. The labour of breaking a road, upon snow-shoes, when the snow sinks under the feet seventeen or eighteen inches every step, is severe beyond description. The back, loins, knees, and in fact every part of the body, has a share of the fatigue. It was now four in the afternoon, and we yet perceived two or three rows of trees between us and the mountains.* In

* So deceiving is the appearance of a few trees on an immense snow-covered plain, that, when you think yourself within a mile or two of them, you are perhaps four or

every one of these rows we also met a rivulet of greater or lesser width, difficult to cross; so that, wet and weary, we were obliged again to repose a while. I suffered severely in my feet, having worn out all the country boots I had with me; and my European ones had been very unfit for this sort of service, whereby my feet were kept continually wet and cold. As the lives of the reindeer depended upon our attaining the mountain before us—after talking the matter over seriously, we forgot our fatigues and redoubled our efforts. Between six and seven in the evening I thought I perceived the last row of trees which intercepted our view of the foot of the mountains; and we pushed eagerly on to pass it. Our disappointment was excessive when we could plainly distinguish two more intersections; but again, not seeing any thing beyond them, we consoled ourselves with the idea, that those were certainly the last. Arriving at them, we were chagrined to find the largest stream we had yet encountered. This, however, after being completely soaked through, and our strength almost exhausted, we contrived

five miles off: at first they appear like small shrubs; and it is not until you get quite near you perceive they are small trees.

to pass. When on the other side, there were yet some versts between us and the foot of the mountain, which the Karaikee declared he was too weak to accomplish. The Tongusee likewise complained, but said we were now so near, that if I could give him a little food of any sort to recruit his strength, we might remain on the spot where we were until the baggage-deer came up with us, while he would take his own to the mountain to pasture. I now recollected that my cook formerly kept in my sledge one of the small vessels with the deers' feet he had boiled down. On examination, I found it, together with a little salt, and we were all not a little rejoiced thereat; being at a great distance from my baggage, and having taken nothing but water all the day. As we had no bread, and but a small portion of jelly for each person, we were obliged to make up the deficiency by drinking two or three large draughts of water. Scanty as was our repast, we were all much refreshed. I had often supped more plentifully, but certainly never with a better appetite. Immediately afterwards the Tongusee, whom I armed with a Spanish knife and a spear, to protect him against the bears, left us, whilst the Karaikee and myself collected wood, made a large

fire, and, placing a quantity of bushes before it on the snow, wrapped ourselves up in our parkas and went to sleep.

Between three and four in the morning of the 13th, I was awaked by the arrival of my servants and the baggage-deer. They had followed the track we had made, without which, they said, the deer would never have been able to accomplish the distance.

We now got a good breakfast, and then started again, under the hottest sun I had yet experienced. Both deer and men suffered so much from the heat, they could scarcely crawl; and it was eleven o'clock before we arrived at the mountain. Our deer were obliged to go to the summit before moss could be procured.

The 14th proved almost as fatiguing and unpleasant as the day before; however, we kept close to the mountains, purposely, not wishing to be again so far a-head of my baggage and provisions. The moment the snow became soft, I directed my course through a forest that skirted some hills, where the Tongusee assured me we should find food for the reindeer, and where we arrived about eleven o'clock, expecting the rest of our party to be up with us early in the afternoon.

At four o'clock, one of the Tongusees came to

us on snow-shoes, with the unwelcome news that the deer having lain down, quite tired, he did not suppose they could get to the desired point before night. This was the second time I had been separated from the party, without food. Having preceded them so short a time, I did not imagine we had got so far off. The only food we had was a partridge I had shot in the morning. I roasted it on my spear, and divided it into three parts, which, without bread or salt, composed our dinner; the Tongusee having the entrails added to his share, which he devoured with great avidity, and without being cleaned, after toasting them a little before the fire.

It was two in the morning before the party arrived, the Tongusees declaring they had never in their lives suffered so much difficulty; and we all now determined it was better to continue along the ridge of mountains than attempt the valley again, where the deer were every day in danger of perishing. My Cossack complained greatly of the Tongusee drivers, saying they were careless, idle fellows, and that he was obliged to quarrel with, and even beat them, to get them to assist the deer on the way.

On the 15th (of May) the Cossack preferred another complaint, and begged I would threaten

two of the drivers, who were sitting down smoking their pipes, and were called in vain to assist their companions. Having my gun in my hand, I walked up, and, shaking it at them, to frighten them, made the Karaikee explain that I should be obliged to beat those who disobeyed the Cossack, and refused to assist at a time when, they knew, their services were so highly necessary. I added, that their behaviour was the more unpardonable in persons who had been so well treated by me in every way.

After getting over the first mountain, on looking round to examine our party, we found these two fellows had absconded with two of the reindeer, that were not laden. This was a most unpleasant circumstance, as I was told that they knew the road better than any of the rest.

The road proved like that before described, except that the snow was not quite so deep. Descending the mountain, we came to an open stream, narrow, deep, and rapid, and were obliged to make a bridge to take over the sledges; the deer going about a verst higher up, where there was a spot fordable. One of them had the slender remains of my stock of biscuit and my skin coverings on his back, which he

contrived to shake from him into the stream; and, before we could recover them, the biscuits were all completely soaked and spoiled. Pitching our tent on a rising ground on the opposite side, I dried a dozen of them, that were not broken, in the sun; the rest we consumed at once, as we perceived they would not keep in that state.

We remained encamped on this spot until the 16th, when our guides led us up a steep mountain, which we climbed with great difficulty; nor could I perceive, when we got there, how we were to descend the opposite side, which was steeper than where we ascended. The Tongusees begged me not to be uneasy, adding that, if I would remain there the whole day, to refresh the deer, they would answer for getting safely down the mountain on the following morning. When I questioned them closely, they confessed they had never been there before, but said they were sure they could find the road, and were not more than three days' march from a tabboon. Moss was here in greater plenty than we had yet found it; and the deer being much tired, I complied with the Tongusees' request. They promised to proceed in future as expeditiously as possible.

It was my intention, on going to rest, to have awaked about ten o'clock at night, in order to set out early; but the severe fatigue we had undergone the day before made me sleep soundly until after midnight. On awaking, I called aloud, for some time, before any one came; at length one of my Chinese servants entered my tent, and told me the Tongusees were no where to be found! I now roused my guide and the Karaikee, when, to our grief and astonishment, we perceived these unfeeling rascals had gone off in the night, not leaving us even a single deer for food, and returning by the road they came.

We were now five in number, namely, the Cossack, a Karaikee, two Chinese servants, and myself, left, with all our baggage, on one of the highest mountains of Siberia, in a wild uninhabited country! We had already been twelve days from Towisk, and had therefore every reason to believe we were not more than three or four days march from some Tongusee tabboon; but, as we were all totally ignorant of the road, it was difficult to decide which way to direct our course. The Cossack, who did not deserve the name, was a perfect woman in character, more alarmed than any body else, fright-

ening the young Karaikee and my servants, and proposing a hundred different schemes. I would not listen to any of them, until I had weighed the matter maturely, and examined well the country about us. The first thing, however, was to see what stock of provisions we had. I found it to consist of a few pounds of reindeer meat almost spoiled, two or three pounds of rice, a small quantity of Manilla sweet chocolate, our biscuits reduced in number to twelve, about the size of a dollar each, two or three small lumps of sugar remaining, and a very small quantity indeed of salt and pepper; but fortunately a little box full of good tea. After this review of our provisions, I felt assured that, with rigid economy, they could keep our bodies and souls together for at least twelve or fifteen days. In the mean time it was highly probable I should be able to shoot something to assist in preventing us from starving. I had a plan of Kamtchatka that included the shores of the Ochotsk sea, on the Siberian side, as far as Yamsk, and, assisted by a pocket compass, showed me on which side the sea lay. But the Cossack declared he had seen it the day before from the mountain, on the opposite side of the rivulet. I therefore determined we should go

together to a high peak only a few versts distant, and assure ourselves whether it was or was not the sea that he had seen. When about to depart we looked in vain for our snow-shoes, of which, it appeared, those fellows had robbed us to prevent our overtaking them suddenly.

About six o'clock on the morning of the 17th we left the encampment, and, although we kept in the tracks of the reindeer, we sunk above our knees at every step, and suffered the severest fatigue before attaining the height from whence we expected to behold the sea. At the first view the expanse appeared to me no more than an immense extent of low grounds covered with fog. The Cossack persisted to the contrary, and showed me a valley, on the opposite side, where we could distinguish the trees, and which appeared so very different from that before us, that I was induced to give into his opinion of its being the ocean. However, not feeling perfectly satisfied on the subject, I told him we must visit, on the following morning, the ridge of mountains that surrounded us in the form of a crescent, about thirty versts in extent. This, I added, might be easily accomplished by making ourselves snow-shoes with the boards of our sledges. He seemed lost, and

wavering every minute, sometimes proposing one thing and sometimes another, and at length requested that he and the Karaikee might go in search of reindeer men, while we remained on the mountain to await their return. I was obliged to put a stop to any farther proposals of this kind, by telling him that I was perfectly aware of his cowardice and deceit, and that as I was ignorant of the character of the Karaikee, who might likewise not be trust-worthy, I should watch them both narrowly. "You see," said I, "how I am armed; and I shall put the first man to death who attempts any thing improper, or disobeys my orders." This threat had the desired effect; he became instantly more obedient. On my return to the tent I armed my Chinese servants, privately desiring them to keep a strict watch on the other two, as I had reason to believe they wished to rob us of our provisions, and make their escape. At night, before I went to sleep, I collected all the provisions together, also my little axe, knife, guns, and pistols, and slept near them. The Karaikee and Cossack I placed in the middle of the tent, and my Chinese servants at each side of them. I should have premised, that, previously to going to rest, I visited another height about two versts

off, on the same side as that where our tent stood. Though I could not discover the sea, I had the good fortune to find my snow-shoes amongst the bushes, the Tongusees having either lost them in passing, or perhaps hidden them there purposely: the Cossack made himself a tolerably good pair from the boards of the sledges, so that we were well prepared for an excursion the following morning. My cook informed me he had a cold boiled partridge that I had killed a few days before and forgotten; and this, with a few small biscuits, was destined to support the Cossack and myself through the fatigues of the following day. The reindeer meat, that was likely to spoil soon, I gave to the Karaikee and my servants, and ordered the cook to half boil it, which not only reduced its bulk, but preserved it from being tainted.

CHAPTER X.

Continuation of the journey—Chain of mountains—Debate as to the right direction of the route—New travelling arrangements—Author's exhortations to those with him—Part of the baggage is left behind on a mountain—Perilous descent of the mountain—Fears expressed by the Author's Karaikee attendant—Mutual promises entered into by the party—Stormy weather and scanty food—Night-quarters in a forest—Contrivance for passing a stream—Incipient signs of vegetation—Excessive fatigue endured—A loss on the road—Tea without sugar—Effect of the sun on the snow, increasing the difficulty of progress—Hopes delayed of discovering the sea—Screech-owl soup!—Necessity for personal conveyance of the baggage—Increased fatigue of the travellers—A shooting adventure.

On the 18th of May, at three o'clock in the morning, we set out on our excursion, after I had armed myself with two guns, in full hopes that, as we had seen some tracks in coming up the mountain, we should have the good fortune to meet with a bear. It had frozen during the night, and my Cossack's snow-shoes not being

covered with moose or seal skin, as they generally are, he got very many falls. I was therefore fearful of trusting him with one of my guns, and was obliged to carry them both myself during the day. With much labour and fatigue we contrived to climb the summit of the highest mountain of the opposite ridge. We had now an extensive view of the country around us, and were most woefully disappointed in beholding the sea that we thought we had seen the day before, transmuted into trees, hills, and plains! The Cossack became quite despondent, declared himself so much deceived he would not venture to trust his eyes again, and protested he would follow most rigidly my advice and commands.

The chain of mountains on which we were, formed a semicircle, extending within a few versts of the place where our tents stood. I therefore found it would be much easier to continue along the summits that joined together and were nearly level through the hollows' being filled with snow, until I should get opposite to our mountain, than to return by the road we came. This also gave us an opportunity of seeing the country to a considerable distance on the opposite side, and discovering the sea, should

it be any where near us. I felt confident, however, from the examination of my chart, and the direction of the compass, that the sea could not lie so far to the Northward of us; but being there, I was willing to satisfy myself, as much as possible, by ocular demonstration. We continued along the tops of the mountains until we made the tour of the semicircle, unsuccessful in all our endeavours to discover the ocean.

We now found ourselves immediately opposite to our tent, having a steep descent to make, a rivulet of a considerable size to cross in the valley, and the high mountain to ascend, on which it stood. As the snow was soft, and my snow-shoes large, I drew them both together, and, sitting down on them, held my two guns with my left arm, the butts resting on the snow-shoes, and, with a short stick in my right hand to guide myself, I went down with the rapidity of lightning. The Cossack followed safely in my path.

We had some difficulty in crossing the rivulet, and rested on the other side. With the cold partridge and biscuit we recruited our strength, the better to accomplish the ascent before us. Between three and four in the afternoon we got to our tent, disappointed, weary,

and sad; having walked near forty versts with a slender dinner, exposed to a hot sun and severe labour, for nothing. Our companions were greatly dejected, on hearing that all appearance had vanished of the sea, which the Cossack was so confident of having seen. The Karaikee said, he had been considering the distance we had made, and thought it was too great to attempt to return, and he was willing now to obey my orders, and accompany me through whatever road I chose to take. We discussed the business for some time, and at length I determined to descend the mountain, opposite to where we had ascended, and pursue a west-south-west course by compass. This appeared to me, from what the Tongusees and the Karaikee said, to be the nearest course to the sea. We therefore concluded to leave all our baggage behind, except what was barely necessary; and to break up one sledge to make snow-shoes for the two Chinese, reducing the remaining two to a convenient size for us to draw our things upon them.

Having a good stock of powder, shot, and bullets, with three guns, two pair of pistols, and two swords, we had ample means of defending ourselves, and likewise of procuring game when our scanty supply of provisions should be expended.

We worked hard to accomplish our business, so as to leave our encampment early, and were ready by three o'clock in the morning of the nineteenth. My party opposed my putting the tent on one of the sledges, offering as a reason that we could very well sleep in the open air. I persisted, however; declaring that, next to our guns and provisions, I considered it the most important thing for the preservation of our health. We had had such a long continuance of fine weather, it was rational to expect a change, when it might probably rain for two or three days together, and where should we find shelter from the storm? I told them, I was too old a traveller, and knew too well the value of a covering of this sort to dispense with it, and that I would carry it on my own back sooner than it should be left behind. Seeing me thus determined, they consented, and the tent was spread over the things, on the larger of the two sledges, which the Cossack and myself were to draw. I likewise explained to them the necessity of firmness and an unaltered resolution; telling them, that they must put their trust in God, while exerting every nerve, and all their fortitude of mind, to keep themselves from sinking under the incessant fatigue we must in-

evitably experience; for that we had but a scanty allowance of food, and must push on in full hopes of being able to procure more by the road; though we could form no judgment as to when the period of our troubles and labours would arrive.

It was about four in the morning, when they declared themselves fully prepared to meet every difficulty, and, having piled up our baggage that was to remain, and covered it well with bushes, bear skins, &c. we erected a cross over it, with a long pendant of linen, in order to attract the notice of any person that might pass near it. The Cossack and myself were tackled to the largest sledge; the Karaikee and the two Chinese to the lesser one. Thus arranged, we bade adieu to our mountain, commencing a frightful descent, which on the very first onset I perceived to appal my companions. It was necessary to go sidelong down, for a little distance, in order to escape a precipice immediately in front; and this we found the greatest difficulty in performing. The sledges were overset at every instant, and by the time the sun was up we had broken several of the thongs that connected them together; and we were forced to stop. We therefore only accomplished about two versts; ar-

riving on a level spot, bare of snow, not far beyond the precipice. The Karaikee and the two Chinese were so disheartened and fatigued, they fell down on the moss and went to sleep. Immediately the Cossack and myself unloaded the sledges, and bound them strongly with new thongs of seal skin, so as to prevent their breaking in future. I now, fortunately, recollected a piece of Manilla white rope I had left behind, and returned to the encampment to find it, as well as to strip the baggage of all the leather strings that were attached to it. I conceived they might be useful to us in the construction of a raft, should it please God to conduct us to a river, whereby we might descend to the ocean. On my return, the Karaikee was awake, and again said, I had better let him go back to Towisk. After counting to him the number of days we had been on the road, I assured him, that although I might part with some of the provisions, nothing could induce me to give him a gun, or any part of my powder and shot; adding that, what we could spare of the former, would not be sufficient to support him more than one or two days, and he must inevitably starve, when it should be expended. This made him irresolute, when, after some minutes

of reflection, he declared, that he would waver no more. He then gave me his hand, as a token of his determination to remain; and promised to obey me most implicitly in every thing. I made the Cossack and the Chinese join their hands to ours, and, turning to the East, cross themselves, as I did, to confirm their promise; assuring them I would eat, drink, sleep, and work, the same as the rest, nor require of them one single act that I was not ready and willing to assist in performing myself. I had preserved a couple of wine glasses of rum from the stock I brought with me, and, having plenty of tea, I gave each man his proportion of it in a cup of tea, after drinking which, they all seemed quite stout and refreshed. But I delayed attempting the descent before us until near ten o'clock in the forenoon. The surface of the snow having been frozen a little during the night, would render our passage down too rapid and dangerous, before the sun should have softened it sufficiently to let the sledges break through.

We left on this spot every thing that appeared superfluous in the way of clothes, &c. making the sledges as light as possible. The Cossack and myself led the way; and I soon perceived that we should have some difficulty in

accomplishing the business; but the danger was not so great as we imagined. Although we sunk up to our knees every step, and held a stout stick each, as preventers, before my sledge, it oftentimes dragged us both down for thirty or forty yards at a time, without the possibility of stopping it, until its course was arrested by the mound of snow that gathered before it. The descent was almost perpendicular in many places.* In this way we continued gaining a few yards at a time, and at length arrived at a long gradual descent, wood-covered, over which we drew the sledges, but not without severe fatigue. We injured our snow-shoes much by often falling, owing to the softness and deepness of the snow; so that we determined to rest ourselves there until evening. Indeed, it was absolutely necessary, to repair our strength, as well as our snow-shoes; and, after making a scanty repast, we slept profoundly until eight o'clock at night.

When we awoke we were assailed by an easterly wind, with raw, uncomfortable weather, and snow and sleet falling in abundance. We

* Indeed the descent was so very abrupt, I was fearful at the first moment we should have tumbled headlong down: and certainly nothing but the softness of the snow saved us.

set out; but by the time we had got two versts off, were wet to the skin; and, perceiving a nice spot near a rivulet, we pitched our tent, to protect us from the storm. My companions now declared how greatly they were obliged to me, for having persisted in bringing the tent (so absolutely necessary to defend us against the inclemency of the weather); for, it proved large enough to cover our baggage as well as ourselves.

It continued to blow, rain, hail, and snow, without intermission all the twentieth, and until seven o'clock on the evening of the twenty-first, in such a manner as rendered it impossible to make a fire for the greater part of the time. This delay, however, afforded us an opportunity of mending our boats and clothes, that were much torn, as well as making up for the loss of sleep we had experienced before. Having only a scanty portion of food, we drank tea twice every twenty-four hours, and in the morning we took thin rice-water, with a small lump of chocolate each, to make it palatable. We perceived that, laborious as was our march, this nourishment was enough to keep us alive until it should please heaven to direct us where we

might procure, with our guns, the means of living well.

I was pleased at seeing my companions more cheerful, and seemingly determined to exert all their fortitude, courage, and perseverance, so necessary to conquer difficulties and insure our safety.* We were an unfortunate little band, thrown upon a wide wilderness, but relying on heaven and our good stars; entirely ignorant of the country, and having nothing but a pocket-compass to direct us, towards the ocean; as to which, whether it was one hundred or twenty versts distant, we could not possibly tell.

The weather continued cloudy and threatening rain, but we set out notwithstanding, directing our route as before. We arrived in a short time at a forest, where the way became so uneven, with large hollows occasionally full of water, added to the inconvenience of a dark night, accompanied with snow and rain, that

* The Chinese cook had indeed before, whilst amongst the Karaikees, exhibited his courage and fidelity; and the other, although a boy of only eighteen, was infinitely superior to the guide, or Cossack, so called, who was, indeed, so weak that he could carry very little, and was afraid of his shadow.

our passage across it was not only cold and uncomfortable, but difficult and tedious. In passing the forest we had the pleasure to hear some ducks fly from some of the little ponds; which circumstance cheered our hearts with the idea of being able to shoot some of them in the morning. Not long after, we had the satisfaction to hear the roaring of a brisk current, which confirmed the opinion of our having arrived where we should probably procure some water-fowl. On arriving near it we concluded to wait there until morning; and being wet, cold, hungry, and weary, we made a fire by an old dead tree, that served for fuel, boiled our tea-kettle, and, by drinking plentifully of that delicious beverage, tea, kept ourselves warm till it became light enough to see to pitch our tent.

At day-light we perceived a number of trees cut and burnt about us, which led us to believe we had hit upon the summer horse-road to Ochotsk, and that by following it we must soon get to the ocean. The Cossack said, he knew that in many parts the road lay along the sea-coast; and the finding of a horse's hoof,* when

* Whilst pitching our tent, I found amongst some sticks, that I scraped from under the snow, a horse's hoof and some bones, which gave us hopes of having discovered

engaged in pitching our tent, assured me this had often been the resting place of summer travellers from Towisk. Though we felt most thankful to heaven for all these consoling circumstances, we were extremely anxious and undecided what course to pursue, the snow covering so deeply the ground, that it was impossible to follow a track only used during the summer months. On cutting down the dead tree, it proved to be dry-rotten within, and we broke it into small pieces, strewing them over the snow under our tent, beneath a couple of bear-skins. This made us a comfortable dry spot whereon to repose our tired limbs, and, indeed, the first of the kind since our leaving the mountain. After making our usual slender repast, we slept soundly until the evening. The storm still raged so furiously, it was impossible to continue our journey, and we found the greatest difficulty in keeping up a fire, even for the short time necessary to boil our tea-kettle.

Both day and night of the twenty-second proved equally dismal, and prevented us from

the road generally travelled in the summer. We could not, however, after leaving that spot, find any trees marked, or, in fact, the smallest indication by which to direct our course.

going outside the tent, except merely to prepare our food; we, therefore, occupied ourselves again in mending our boots and clothes, that were much injured in crossing the forest, as before mentioned.

The weather cleared up on the twenty-third, about seven in the morning, when I made an excursion with my guns, but soon returned unsuccessful, having seen nothing but two partridges, so excessively wild that there was no getting a shot at them. We now packed all our baggage on the sledges, and the Cossack and myself, stripping ourselves, waded the stream with an axe, and cutting two trees, growing near the opposite bank, let them fall across to make a bridge for the sledges to pass over. This we soon performed, by tying pieces of wood across them at intervals, so that with a rope attached to the sledges, and the assistance of our companions on the other side, we drew them over in safety. Under a high bank, that bounded part of the rivulet, and was exposed to the south, the ground appeared to have been sometime bare of snow, and showed marks of vegetation. On examination, we found there a few handfuls of a small sour root, called in

Russian, Keesletza,* just pushing from the ground, like asparagus. When boiled it made a very acceptable and palatable addition to our scanty dinner.

'It was about three or four in the afternoon before we were prepared to depart, the making the bridge and getting the sledges over having consumed much time and required considerable labour. We had again a tiresome drag through a thick forest; and we arrived about ten at night near another small stream; here it was likewise necessary to make a bridge, but the channel being narrower and more shallow, enabled us to accomplish it with less pains and loss of time than in the former case. I discovered the tracks of a bear, and pursued them with great eagerness a considerable distance; but, perceiving he had turned towards the mountains, and was probably a great way off, I was obliged to give up my pursuit, and went back, quite tired, to my companions. Our fatigue had been excessive for the last two days, so much so, that at the close of each, we thought we should be un-

* *Rumex Acetosa*; class, *Hexandria*; order, *Monogynia*.

able to continue it diurnally; the necessity of proceeding, however, inspired us with new strength every day, and made us forget what we had experienced on the preceding one.

On the 24th we all awoke refreshed, and, after our usual thin repast, pushed on to pass a considerable extent of forest. The Karaikee said, "I remember to have heard the Tongusees speak of this place, and say, that on the other side there was a large body of low grounds clear of trees, but very wet, which must be crossed to arrive at the ocean." This buoyed me up with fresh hopes that our labours would, in a few days, be crowned with success. We had scarcely left the place where we had encamped, when it occurred to me to examine our sledge, as it appeared to move more lightly than heretofore: I was not a little grieved to find the two bags of shot missing, which we had considered as our main chance of procuring food, should we arrive at an uninhabited part of the sea-coast. I armed the Cossack with a gun, and he retraced our road back a considerable distance, but returned unsuccessful; nor could we form a conjecture where the bags had been lost, unless, in our crossing the last bridge, they had fallen into the stream.

It was now between five and six in the evening, the weather cold, and, as we had only a single and a double shot-belt full of shot, we concluded it better to continue on with this stock, than to lose in a fruitless search the only fine night for travelling we had experienced since we left the mountain. We therefore took advantage of it, and proceeded, though the first part of our road presented many difficulties, such as our breaking through the snow occasionally into deep holes. In a short time we were so wet and cold we were obliged to stop and make a fire to dry our clothes, refreshing ourselves at the same time with some tea. Though it was without sugar, and we had but a small piece of chocolate to bite as we sipped, it proved extremely palatable, and soon warmed us so as to enable us to proceed again.*

* We became so accustomed to drink tea without sugar, that in a little time more we should have forgotten the conjunction entirely. It certainly proved to us a most exhilarating beverage, and, even without milk and sugar, had the effect of stimulating our empty stomachs, and making the pangs of hunger infinitely less troublesome than they would have been without it. I am perfectly satisfied it is more wholesome than raw spirits or even grog, when there is a scarcity of food,—and that it sustains the strength longer.

We encountered rivulets during the night, and were obliged to cut trees and make bridges to pass them; yet we accomplished a very considerable distance, getting at length into a country thinly wooded, and where a number of burned and old trees seemed to indicate that the Tongusees had been there formerly. During the night I directed my course entirely by the Karaikee's recollection of what he had heard the Tongusees say.

It was now five o'clock on the 25th of May, the sun quite hot, and the snow soft, and we therefore strained every nerve to cross a piece of wet low-grounds, and attain a dry copse in the vicinity of a mountain, from the top of which the Karaikee conceived we should discover the ocean. Just after our arrival at this spot we saw three wild geese, and heard the screaming of a crow. Not having heard or seen any of those birds since our leaving Towinsk, we naturally concluded we had arrived in the neighbourhood of the sea.

I awoke my party before three in the afternoon, the weather being cool and the wind high, so as to promise another good night for travelling. We set off between eight and nine in the evening of the 25th, putting our firm

trust in God, and returning thanks to him that we had even yet, without meat, enough to preserve our lives for some days. This night's journey proved more difficult than that of the previous one, as we were obliged to drag the sledges over a wet country, almost bare of snow. Wading the branching rivulets, we made three or four bridges, and before midnight were obliged to stop and drink some tea to recruit our strength. By the time we had done this the sun was near the horizon: we, however, got to a nice dry forest close to the foot of the mountain before mentioned. The latter was bare of snow and not high, and the Cossack assured me, after resting himself, that he could very easily ascend it, provided I would give him a dram and something of refreshment. I had secreted five biscuits, which I meant to have kept to the last extremity, but I now produced one of them, and giving him the last tea-spoonful of rum that remained in the bottle, with a cup of tea, I sent him off the moment he declared himself sufficiently strong to undertake the journey. Being myself greatly fatigued, and as my servants said they did not wish to go to rest for some time, I determined to lie down, desiring them to keep a good look out for game, as we had seen some

pheasants* on arriving at the forest. I had scarcely been asleep when my boy awoke me, informing there were some pheasants sitting on a tree close by the tent. One of them I had the good fortune to shoot immediately, and shortly after a small screech-owl; but although I traversed the forest for a considerable distance round, I could find nothing more, the noise of the gun having frightened all the rest away. We could not, however, but feel highly thankful to Heaven for this supply at a time when we were entirely without animal food, to enable us to endure the severe fatigue to which we were daily exposed. Before ten in the day our Cossack returned, having found the small mountain very easy of ascent; but to our great sorrow and disappointment he had beheld nothing but mountains, plains, and forests, on the other side. As I had kept to the westward during all this time, in conformity with the Karaikee's opinion, I now determined to pursue my usual course by compass, satisfied the sea must be to the southward and westward, although it had not been seen from the top of the mountain. In the afternoon, with half a

* Or, more properly speaking, black game, there being no birds identical with pheasants in any part of Siberia.

tea-cup full of rice and the owl cut into small pieces, we made a soup, and found the flesh not inferior in whiteness and taste to that of a chicken; this enabled us to keep our pheasant for the following day.*

The evening of the 26th was again cool and pleasant, but the country being low and marshy, almost bare of snow, and full of ponds and small streams, we dragged our sledges over it with great difficulty, and not without severe fatigue.

We were obliged to stop about four in the morning of the 27th, cold, hungry, weary, and dejected, having arrived where the country entirely round was destitute of snow, so that it became absolutely necessary to change our mode of travelling; it was no longer possible to drag the sledges, and we must inevitably carry our things on our backs, or proceed without them.

We staid here until the morning of the 29th, after breaking up our small sledge, leaving our large kettle, some clothes, fur coverings, and other baggage behind, and packing the remainder on the large sledge: all five of us being tackled to it, we conceived we might in this way

* It was, however, a very scanty meal for five hungry persons.

get along with tolerable ease, and preserve some things which otherwise we should be obliged to throw away. After undergoing severer fatigue than we had yet experienced, we stopped about four in the afternoon two versts off, where there was a piece of low ground half overflowed, and a small rapid stream almost level with the surface running through the middle of it. We laboured severely until six o'clock, cutting large timbers, and carrying them on our shoulders to make a bridge over this rivulet, which was scarcely accomplished when it began to rain. The stream swelled and foamed over our bridge, and we were obliged to pitch our tent and await better weather.

On the morning of the 30th the weather was clear and serene, and the waters having subsided, left our bridge, to our great joy, uninjured, whereby we were enabled to pass easily to the other side. However, we had scarcely got over when the water, coming down again in a torrent, overflowed and destroyed the bridge,* so that we

* In the spring this circumstance often occurs, as it freezes during the night, but, the moment the sun is up strong enough to thaw the snows, the streams are suddenly swelled by the quantity of water that flows from the mountains.

conceived ourselves extremely fortunate in having accomplished our object so early. We now broke up the large sledge, making a kind of long basket of the upper part, that held several little necessaries, and the two Chinese carried it by a long pole placed on their shoulders; the Cossack, the Karaikee, and myself, carrying my box of papers, the tent, guns, &c. I divided my load into two equal portions, tying one to each end of a stick, and carrying it on my shoulder after the Chinese method. After eating a small portion of our pheasant, and drinking plenty of tea to supply the place of food, we set out again; and although we had suffered severely while drawing the sledges, we found this last mode still more disagreeable, from its obliging us to stop every forty or fifty yards to take breath. Independently of a heavier load than my companions, I had the encumbrance of a pair of pistols, two double-barrelled guns,* all the powder and shot, my Spanish knife, my box of papers, the tea, and a hatchet, making altogether nearly four Russian poods, equal to upwards of a hundred and forty English pounds.

* A single-barrelled duck-gun was carried by one of the Chinese, being lashed to the pole to which his burthen was slung.

The two Chinese got quickly tired of their first method of carrying their load; upon which they divided it, and followed my example. We however all had our shoulders soon deprived of the skin, and our feet severely wounded; notwithstanding which, it was necessary to persist. But a small piece of the pheasant remained for the next day, and no appearance of any sort of game near.

On the 31st we threw every thing away, except what was absolutely necessary; which, however, did not much relieve my load, as it was composed principally of my guns, powder, and shot, and papers, together with our tea, and things I did not wish to trust to any person.* Just as we were about to depart, on the evening of this day (after having consumed the remains of our pheasant), two wild geese flew over us. I fired at them, and thought I had missed, but my Chinese boy declared he heard the shot strike, and had seen

* I had nothing that I could throw away, except a jacket lined with sable's fur, which the Karaikee no sooner perceived than he picked it up, and declared he would carry it for me, sooner than such a nice jacket should be lost. He carried it the whole time, always handing it to me at the approach of bad weather, or when I laid down to sleep.

them alight, about two hundred yards off, on a spot which he pointed out. The Cossack and myself repaired thither with all possible speed. One of the geese fled at our approach; and the other, that was wounded, remained in the middle of a large bog, where, if shot, I was fearful we should find very great difficulty in getting it. After shooting it, I entered the bog, but found the surface of a tough sod, that sunk down, bringing the mud and water to my middle without breaking. I had used the precaution to take a large stick in my hand, or I should not have been able to extricate myself. The sod at length broke, and let me down to my arm-pits; and I was obliged to return and tell the Cossack, who was a much lighter man, to try what he could do. He succeeded remarkably well, until he had got nearly back with the goose, when he sunk suddenly up to his neck, and began to roar and bawl in a most hideous manner, being so alarmed at the same time, that he could hardly make use of the stick. I had the utmost difficulty to get near him with another stick, which he laid hold of, and I pulled him out, almost smothered with mud.*

* Dangerous as was the situation of my companion, his ridiculous figure made me burst into a fit of laughter,

We considered ourselves fortunate, notwithstanding these mishaps, and thanked God for having given us what would support life for some days; the bird being a large-sized one, while the sight of it gave new strength to my companions.

and the Chinese joined me heartily; this caused him to scream the more loudly, in order to impress me with the fuller idea of his perilous situation. When extricated from the bog, he crossed himself a dozen times, and then laughed as heartily as myself. Indeed the goose was such a prize as gave us spirits to laugh.

them alight, about two hundred yards off, on a spot which he pointed out. The Cossack and myself repaired thither with all possible speed. One of the geese fled at our approach; and the other, that was wounded, remained in the middle of a large bog, where, if shot, I was fearful we should find very great difficulty in getting it. After shooting it, I entered the bog, but found the surface of a tough sod, that sunk down, bringing the mud and water to my middle without breaking. I had used the precaution to take a large stick in my hand, or I should not have been able to extricate myself. The sod at length broke, and let me down to my arm-pits; and I was obliged to return and tell the Cossack, who was a much lighter man, to try what he could do. He succeeded remarkably well, until he had got nearly back with the goose, when he sunk suddenly up to his neck, and began to roar and bawl in a most hideous manner, being so alarmed at the same time, that he could hardly make use of the stick. I had the utmost difficulty to get near him with another stick, which he laid hold of, and I pulled him out, almost smothered with mud.*

* Dangerous as was the situation of my companion, his ridiculous figure made me burst into a fit of laughter,

We considered ourselves fortunate, notwithstanding these mishaps, and thanked God for having given us what would support life for some days; the bird being a large-sized one, while the sight of it gave new strength to my companions.

and the Chinese joined me heartily; this caused him to scream the more loudly, in order to impress me with the fuller idea of his perilous situation. When extricated from the bog, he crossed himself a dozen times, and then laughed as heartily as myself. Indeed the goose was such a prize as gave us spirits to laugh.

CHAPTER XI.

Prosecution of the journey—Renewed endeavours to discover the Sea—Extensive burning of the Woods and Grass—Persecution by Mosquitoes—Fatigue and hunger—A sporting accident—The party reach a river and construct a raft for its navigation—Fog, wind, and rain—Perilous adventure on the raft—Seasonable acquisition of a Tongusee Canoe—A deserted jourta—Rapidity of the current—Joyful meeting with three natives—Arrival at Grebay—Kindness of an old Yakut woman — Towinsk — Hospitable treatment there — Amokthon—Author parts with his Karaikee guide—Encampment of the party by the river Mettaclay—Recovery of the baggage—Messengers from the Governor of Ochotsk—Remarks on the providential escape of the party during their past route — Inskay mountain—Kindness of the Russian peasants—Inia—Effects of cold on the human faculties—Communication from Captain Minitsky—Arrival at Ochotsk.

RAIN, and the appearance of bad weather, made us continue where we were until the morning of the first of June, when we set out to ascend a mountain that lay immediately opposite to us, and from whence we felt confident of getting a sight of the sea.

Having some deep marshes to cross, where the mud and water were up to our knees at every step, we did not gain the foot of the mountain till the evening; and on the morning of the 2nd we ascended it. The sun was excessively hot, and, being all rather weak, we performed the task but slowly. Just as we arrived near the summit, the Cossack fainted away with fatigue; and it was some time before we could bring him to his faculties. As soon as he was a little recovered, I left my party, and, taking my gun, went to the summit of the mountain; but was again woefully disappointed, in not discovering the sea, nor even a bird, or any thing that indicated its vicinity. Small pines and brushwood had obstructed our way in ascending, as well as sharp pointed stones, tearing our clothes and boots, and wounding our feet terribly. I therefore determined to pass the day on that spot, in order to mend our garments, as well as to give rest to the Cossack, who seemed quite exhausted.

Notwithstanding the difficulties of the road, we had accomplished double the distance daily, since we commenced carrying the things on our backs, that we had done when drawing the sledges over the snow.

In the evening I went to the summit of the mountain again, imagining that, as the sun descended, I might discover better what was on the opposite side of some extensive low grounds that lay before us. Whilst there, and holding my compass to take the direction for our route of the following day, I thought I plainly saw, at a great distance to the northward and eastward, three or four men, and as many reindeer or horses! I immediately called out to the two Chinese to light a large fire, and, making the Cossack and Karaikee come up to me, endeavoured to point out to them the objects that had just met my eyes. Although I felt confident I saw men and animals moving, I could not with all my care direct their sight so as to distinguish them; and they persisted in saying they could see nothing. This made me quite unhappy. I continued the fire a long time, and stayed gazing at what I saw until it became so dark, it was no longer at all distinguishable.

On the 3d (June) our clothes being mended, and our Cossack perfectly recovered, we proceeded; but were obliged to keep a route nearly northwest by compass, descending the mountain in a diagonal line, and being greatly annoyed by the roughness of the way. When arrived on the

low grounds, we had a bridge to make over a rivulet ere we could cross them, and get on the high grounds opposite, for better travelling. This done, we found ourselves in a woody country—the trees tall and free from underwood, enabling us to walk on a smooth surface in the shade; and we continued steadily on until between two and three in the day before we stopped to take any refreshment. We had now got out of the woods into a meadow, covered with high grass, old and dry; and finding it a comfortable place, we halted to take refreshment and repose.*

Scarcely had we made our fire, when the grass all around us was in a blaze, obliging us to move to another spot; and the fire raged with such violence it was in vain to attempt extinguishing it. At length the woods,—the whole country around,—were on fire. We were not sorry for an accident that might perhaps, if any of the natives were near, bring them to the spot.

* I stopped here principally to mend our shoes; as our feet were much wounded. Having a pair of slippers with me I cut the upper-leathers off; and, with the assistance of a fork instead of an awl, and some twine, I sewed the soles to my old half-boots; and by that means preserved my feet from being cut.

It also helped to destroy some large swarms of mosquitoes that plagued us not a little on our arrival. Indeed we suffered almost as much from these insects as from fatigue and hunger. Those flying leeches of Siberia never quitted us day or night, unless when on the mountains, or when the wind blew hard enough to sweep them away. Our ears were tired with their hum, and with the singing of the cuckoo,* our daily and nightly music ever since the snow had melted away.

We pitched our tent between nine and ten in the evening, near some marshes, which, according to the direction of my compass, it was necessary we should pass on the following day. This circumstance disheartened us all exceedingly; but we were somewhat enlivened again, before we went to rest, by the sight of ducks and a flock of geese. We also heard some birds scream, which the Karaikee declared were gulls, and at that season of the year seldom seen but in the

* The singing of the cuckoo amongst the mountains, where echo repeated the sad notes over and over again, had a most unpleasant effect upon our feelings, and seemed like a warning voice, that bade us prepare to perish in those solitary wilds! I have never since heard a cuckoo without feeling a painful sensation that I could not overcome.

neighbourhood of the sea, or of large lakes and rivers. As he was a native of the country near Towinsk, I had full confidence in his judgment. We now were cheered therefore with the hopes of soon getting near the sea-coast, where we should be able to procure plenty of food, even though we should find no inhabitants. This was a comfortable reflection, as our goose was nearly consumed, after having held out longer than I expected, considering we had five mouths to feed.

We got off early on the 4th, and had a most fatiguing time till twelve o'clock, when the sun became so oppressive, it was impossible to proceed any farther without refreshment. The skin being chafed from our shoulders, and our feet sore, added to the difficulty of wading the deep marshes that occurred at every instant, we were all completely exhausted. My two Chinese, for the first time, lay down and began to cry! I consoled them with the assurance, that we must either discern the sea, or arrive at some place where we should find plenty of food, in the course of a day or two; and that it was a folly to give up when we were now at the moment of getting over our difficulties. Taking out the rest of the small biscuits that I had carefully preserved, I divided them equally between the

Cossack, the Karaikee, and themselves; and having boiled our kettle, and drunk heartily of tea, the whole party was soon put into good spirits again. As I kept no part of this slender provision for myself, it was for some time before I could prevail upon the two Chinese to eat their biscuit without sharing it with me. However, I would not take it from them; for, although I was tired, I did not feel my strength exhausted as they did. While drinking tea we had the pleasure of hearing distinctly the screaming of gulls, crows, and sheldrakes—sounds truly animating to us, who had scarcely heard any thing for a long time but the voice of the lonely cuckoo in the mountains, and the wild plover on the heath. The latter, by the by, were so truly wild it was impossible to get near enough to kill one.

We rested till two in the day, and then pushed on again till seven in the evening, when we had the satisfaction of pitching our tent near a small lake, that promised to afford us some food. Although this spot was inhabited by numerous flocks of sheldrakes, they were so wild, and kept at such a distance, it was impossible to shoot any of them.

We pursued our journey again early on the

5th, over deep uneven marshes, with spots of scrub-pine, bushes, and heath; and, before twelve o'clock in the day we were all so worn down, that it became again necessary to refresh ourselves with a little tea. My shoulders were now quite raw, and my knees black and blue, through striking against the tin-box that contained my papers, and was hung at one end of the stick with which I carried my load. A very small piece of the goose, with about half a tea-cup full of rice, boiled in a tea-kettle full of water, with a little pepper and no salt, composed our dinner; for we had not been able to find any thing in the vegetable way about us that could possibly be applied to the purposes of food. However, as we had drunk plentifully of tea but a short time before, this meagre repast seemed to satisfy us all; and the rest of my party, hanging their boots and clothes out to dry, rolled themselves on the dry grass and went to sleep. My anxiety however would not permit me to partake of this balm of human woe, particularly when I reflected how absolutely necessary it was to procure food of some sort, if I would keep my companions from sinking, who all complained more of hunger than of any thing else. I was not a little chagrined, like-

wise, to have been obliged to travel during the morning, more to the northward and westward than I wished; several bogs, perfectly impassable, having intervened to prevent our continuing on steadily in a westerly course, the only one, I conceived, that would bring us to the ocean.

Whilst only my companions slept, I drew on my boots, that scarcely deserved the name, and made an excursion with my gun, to see if I could find any game, and also to examine the route necessary to be pursued in the afternoon. It grieved me considerably to perceive that the impediments we had met in the morning increased so much as to render it necessary to proceed due south. I was almost in despair,—when I beheld six large sea-gulls flying in that direction, and which at length seemed to alight near a forest, some distance off, which place, however, I thought we should be able to reach, by exerting ourselves, before seven or eight in the evening. I returned immediately to my companions, who were not a little delighted by this joyful news, the Karaikee assuring me there must be a large river or a lake near, as the kind of gulls I had seen strongly indicated this.

Cheered with these signs and reflections, though sore, hungry, and weary, we pushed on

with great spirit, and, after getting round the deep marsh already described, had the pleasure to find ourselves much nearer the forest than I imagined we should have been. But we experienced most dreadful fatigue in getting there; and it became absolutely necessary to boil the kettle again, and make some tea to refresh ourselves. Tea was now our grand restorative cordial, and, though without sugar, we partook of it as often as we felt overcome by the heat and fatigue of the road; always finding it revive our spirits and renew our strength.

We now found the way moss-covered, dry, and even; and between six and seven in the evening arrived at the forest. To our great astonishment we beheld what we supposed a narrow lake of great length, forming a crescent; the opposite banks being also covered with fine timber. Here we determined to pass the night, and pitched our tent behind a small copse, that concealed it from the lake, in order to prevent it's frightening away any water-fowl that might visit that part. This being accomplished, leaving the Chinese and Cossack to boil the tea-kettle, the Karaikee and myself went to examine the lake. On approaching the banks I discovered two small ducks, quite near the shore, and

had the good fortune to shoot them both at one shot. Running to the water-side to pick them up, God only knows the inexpressible joy that filled our hearts, when we beheld the water move, and satisfied our senses that we were on the banks of a large river. It was somewhat remarkable, that the obstacles I had met with during the last two days, and which disheartened me so much, had yet, by turning me aside from the route I wished to take, been the cause of our falling in with this fine stream, so favourable to our wishes.* We felt satisfied it must bring us to the ocean, from which, by all appearances, we could not be far removed. My companions were overjoyed beyond measure at this discovery; since we could now make a raft, and descend to the sea without undergoing such severe fatigue as heretofore—not to mention the pleasing anticipation of being daily enabled to procure plenty of food. We had also the happiness to find, on the banks of the river, our favourite vegetable, keesletza, which we gathered, determined to make some soup with that and one of our ducks, as we had had nothing for

* When the Karaikee saw the water moving, he fell on his knees and began to pray, whilst the tears of joy streamed from his eyes in abundance.

the last twenty-four hours except tea, and the slender meal before mentioned.

On the 6th of June I went out very early with my gun, but finding no game, picked some handfuls of keesletza, to make soup for our dinner with the remaining duck, and returned to my companions. A number of fine trees lay before us on the ground. I, therefore, marked out those which I thought best suited for our raft. The Cossack declared he would cut them whilst I should go out in search of food, so that we all might be enabled to work the following morning, and leave that place in the evening. Although I walked a considerable distance during the morning, and saw a deer and several geese, ducks, and gulls, they were all so wild, it was impossible to get within shot of them. I returned, quite dejected and tired, along the banks of the river, seating myself in the bushes, about two hundred yards above our tent, where I was determined to stay and shoot something, to afford us a dinner the following day. It was not long before a gull came flying over my head. I shot it, and shortly after, a fine duck, that fell into the river just before me. Leaning on my gun, I pulled off my boots in order to wade after it. Just as I had got them off, perceiving the cur-

rent seize my prize, I rushed into the water, fearful of losing it, and forgetting that I had a gun in my hand until I was out of my depth and obliged to swim. The weight of my clothes and of the double-barrelled fowling piece, embarrassed me so much that I could not keep myself above water; and, sinking several times, I was at length obliged to let go my favourite gun, and even then with difficulty kept myself from sinking. Luckily some bushes grew up not far below me, having their tops above the water, which I attained and laid hold of, though I still found myself out of my depth. Here the duck was entangled, and I secured it. There was a bush for every four or five yards between me and the shore, and I swam from one to another, holding the duck in my mouth, and arriving where it was shallow enough to wade, before my friends, (who were not far off, and to whom I cried out for assistance,) got near enough to aid me. I regretted exceedingly the loss of a gun that had been so useful; but we had two remaining, which were sufficient for our purposes.

On the 7th we all laboured hard to finish our raft, as we had food for that day, and were to trust to our good stars to furnish us on the fol-

lowing. I employed myself in cutting down immediately two large dead trees, for the side pieces; and before two o'clock in the day we had all the timbers well lashed together, and the raft ready to be launched in the water.* We then took our soup, composed of the gull and duck. The gull was so exceedingly rank and fishy that, hungry as I was, I with difficulty swallowed a few spoonfuls of the soup; but my companions were by no means equally nice.

After dinner we launched our raft, which, to our great joy, did not swim too low, and proved, in fact, every thing that we could have wished. It was composed of fifteen lower timbers, of the thickness of a man's thigh, and about sixteen or eighteen feet long, two cross pieces at each end, to which they were strongly lashed with Manilla rope and thongs, and a layer of poles and bushes, placed above all, to sit on.†

* I cut the two outside timbers myself from two large trees that I felled purposely, those which were on the ground being too small; and, as I performed this work with a large Spanish knife, the reader will readily imagine it cost me some trouble ere I had them trimmed and prepared to lash to the rest.

† At this work the Cossack exhibited both skill and industry, for the first time since he had been with us; and, as he had often been engaged in making rafts on

Thus prepared, we placed our baggage upon it, and committed ourselves to the surface of a fine large river, with a current running at the rate of more than five miles an hour. Before quitting this place we all returned thanks to heaven in the most solemn manner, for having conducted us thus far in safety, and prayed fervently for a continuation of the Almighty protection we had so often experienced. We soon discovered a material difference between walking and our present method of travelling, having floated at our ease, before nine at night, a greater distance than we had made during any three days before. We had also the pleasure, for the first time, of being free from mosquitoes and gnats. Just before we stopped for the night, I killed a fine large sheldrake that came flying by.

I determined to stop every night at ten or eleven o'clock, and start again at four in the morning, being fearful lest during the twilight we might run foul of rocks or trees in the way, and injure our raft, so as to oblige us again to go on foot.

We encamped this night close on the bank of

the river Ochota, he understood perfectly what he was about, and proved a very able assistant to me.

the river, amongst some dry grass and not far from a mountain, called Surkapskoy, which the Cossack thought he knew that he had traversed in the winter, and near to which was a Tongusee Tabboon. Between two and three in the morning a swan came floating down the river. I fired at it with my rifle and missed. Perceiving it fly towards a lake at the back of the tent, where we heard another one; I repaired thither and got a shot at it from behind a bush, within forty or fifty yards. The bird rose and flew a little way, and then, to our great joy, fell dead in the middle of the lake. The Cossack, tying two pieces of old timber together with a thong he had in his pocket, floated himself along on them, and brought the swan safely to shore.

This stock of animal food put the whole party in good spirits, and we continued our route on the raft, finding the current increasing every hour, and promising to convey us rapidly to the ocean. During the day I shot another swan and a duck. We soon discovered that the mountain the Cossack thought he knew was much farther from the sea than he imagined; and after we had floated near it, he did not recollect any of the country around. The river was extremely crooked, sometimes carrying us

west, sometimes south, sometimes east, and in fact to all points of the compass.

On the 8th, in the evening, we stopped early, and had, for the first time since we left the mountain, what we thought a good supper, though we were still fearful of consuming meat more than once a day, the wild fowl being excessively shy and difficult to shoot.

The morning of the 9th was cloudy and cool with a strong breeze, blowing right against the current, and making the water beat over our raft, so that we were obliged to place an additional quantity of bushes on the top to keep ourselves dry. One side of the river was bounded by high mountains, covered with forests; the other by extensive meadows and lakes, where we heard quantities of ducks, geese, and swans, but thought it better to continue our route, on a scanty portion of food, than to remain in one spot any time for the purpose of killing them.

The weather became so raw and uncomfortable, being accompanied with a drizzling rain, that we stopped earlier than usual, and continued to halt until four o'clock in the morning of the 10th, when we proceeded again, though a chill fog prevailed, and a good deal of wind. We had a most unpleasant time, but, anxious to

arrive at the ocean, would not lie by—particularly as the stream had increased greatly in rapidity, and now hurried us along with considerable swiftness. About one o'clock, although we were nearly in the middle of the river, which was here upwards of a verst wide, we were suddenly seized by a whirlpool, and in spite of our utmost efforts, having nothing but poles to guide the raft, were drawn violently towards the left bank, and forced under some large trees, which had been undermined by the water, and hung over the surface of the stream, the roots still holding them fast to the shore. I perceived the danger to which we were exposed, and called out to every one to lie flat on his face, and hold fast to the baggage. The branches were so thick, it was impossible for all to escape, and there being barely room to admit the raft under them, they swept off the two Chinese, the Karaikee, my tin-box with all my papers and valuables, our soup-kettle, &c. &c. &c. Nothing now remained but a small tea-kettle and a few other things that happened to be tied fast with thongs. The Karaikee and one of the Chinese seized hold of the branches that swept them off, and held their heads above water, but the youngest of the Chinese having floated away with the current, the

Cossack and myself had the greatest difficulty in paddling the raft up to him. We came just in time to poke our poles down after him as he sank for the third time, which he fortunately seizing, we drew him upon the raft, half drowned. As the current was running at the rate of six or seven miles an hour, we were carried more than half a verst down before we gained the shore; the other Chinese and the Karaikee crying out aloud for assistance. I ran up the shore as quickly as possible, taking a long pole with me, and leaving the Cossack to take care of the raft and the young Chinese. When I arrived at the spot, my Chinese cook informed me he had seized my tin-box with one hand, and was so tired of holding with the other, that if I did not come soon to his assistance he must leave it to the mercy of the current.* Whilst I attempted to walk out on the body of the tree, whose branches they were holding, one of the roots broke, and very nearly

* This tin-box contained all my papers, money, and every thing of value belonging to me, and the Chinese, knowing of what importance it was, took hold of it the moment he perceived the danger of its being swept away; a circumstance indicating his coolness and courage, as he could not swim, and was in imminent danger of drowning.

separated it from the shore; I was, therefore obliged to jump off and stride to one that was two feet under water, hauling myself along by the branches of the others; and at length I got near enough to give the Chinese a pole. He seized fast hold, and I pulled him between two branches, enabling him to get a leg over one, and keep his body above water. Thus placed, he tied the tin-box with his handkerchief to the pole, and I got it safely ashore. I was now obliged to return and assist the Karaikee, who held by some branches far out, and where there were no others near enough for him to reach, in order to draw himself in. After half an hour's labour I got them both on the bank, neither of them knowing how to swim, and both much exhausted by the cold and the difficulty of holding so long against a rapid current.

As the wind commenced blowing very hard, we concluded to stay all that day where we were, it being likewise necessary to dry our clothes, papers, &c. &c. which were all completely wet. In the afternoon the wind died away, and the sun shone out clear, when I commenced drying my papers, and found many of the most valuable of them totally ruined. The ink in some was quite effaced, and others were so stuck together

that they were destroyed in my attempting to separate them. A bundle of paper-money, which I thought impossible to retrieve, I wrapped up in a cloth to absorb the wet from it; I changed the cloth every day, drying it in the sun; and afterwards, although still a little damp, I separated the bills from each other without much injury. This circumstance must have been owing to the peculiar kind of paper of which they were composed, for most of my other bundles of papers which I could not open whilst wet, dried into a solid mass, impossible to recover by any means.

At six in the evening we made an excursion along the banks of the river, to see if we could discover any of the things we had lost, and kill some game. In our rambles we frightened a duck from off her nest, and got six eggs. Shortly after I killed a swan with my rifle; and the poor Karaikee going for it, had the pleasure to find his bundle of clothes that had been swept from the raft. We had lost nearly all our cooking utensils: fortunately our spoons and cups were in our pockets. A small tea-kettle without a cover was now all we had to serve for every purpose; the top of my tin-box we employed as a dish, pouring our soup into it, that we might

eat it more conveniently with our spoons. We felt severely the loss of our soup-kettle, being obliged to make our dinner and drink our tea from the same vessel.

In consequence of the high wind that prevailed, and its being quite unsafe for our frail bark to proceed, we remained here until four o'clock on the 11th, when we departed, though it was still blowing hard, with drizzling rain, making the weather quite cold and uncomfortable. We became so wet and chilled that we stopped early in the evening.

We left our resting-place between four and five on the 12th, with a rapid current that conveyed us swiftly along. About mid-day we espied a Tongusee canoe hung up between two trees; and the appearance of some wood fresh-cut made me immediately push for the shore, inspired with the hope of there finding some inhabitants. In this expectation we were disappointed, though there was every appearance of persons having visited the spot but a short time before. We were not a little overjoyed to find the canoe with paddles and every thing complete. Our raft was much water-soaked and swimming deep, and without the canoe we should have been obliged to remain a day some-

where in order to repair it, and put some additional logs to make it float higher. The canoe we now lashed to one side, put the Karaikee in one end and the Cossack in the other, with a considerable portion of our baggage, and lightened the raft, so that it swam as high as we could wish. We found those two persons with their paddles could turn it more quickly and it better than all five of us had been able to do with poles.

At this place we gathered a large quantity of wild onions, and indeed every day had procured more or less of these along the banks of the river, which proved a very acceptable seasoning to our soup,—all our pepper, as well as our salt, being expended. The canoe was a very great acquisition, being so necessary to guide our raft, and being also a convenience that would enable us to catch any water-fowl that we might wound.

We now floated on a fine, deep, and wide river, and, although extremely crooked, beautiful beyond conception, winding down amongst romantic mountains and through large bodies of rich lowlands, interspersed with lakes, rivulets, and meadows covered with fine grass. It appeared a matter of surprise to me that so fine

a stream, apparently possessing abundance of game and fish, should be entirely destitute of neighbouring inhabitants. We saw numbers of fish constantly playing about us, and contrived a hook with a small nail, but had not the good fortune to catch any of them.

The current seemed to increase as we descended; and we set off before four on the 13th, to take advantage of it. About ten o'clock I discovered a jourta not far from the edge of the left bank, and casting off the canoe, dispatched the Cossack and Karaikee to examine it. They soon returned, informing me it was a winter residence of the Tongusees, but was then quite deserted; and that there was not the smallest appearance of inhabitants any where near. The day was hot and calm, and our visit to the shore brought off to us a swarm of musquitoes that pestered us continually,—an annoyance we had not experienced for some days previously in consequence of the wind and rain. My companions often complained of not having meat enough, and seemed displeased at my dealing it out sparingly. This was, however, absolutely necessary, by reason of the difficulty of killing game; for we perceived that as we descended the river became wider, and the water-fowl

scarcer and more difficult of approach;—besides which, it was quite uncertain whether we should meet inhabitants at the sea-coast; and perhaps, when there, we might find game again scarce and difficult to shoot.

On the 14th the current increased in rapidity to such a degree that it cost us considerable pain and labour to guide our raft in safety; and we felt grateful to Heaven for having fallen in with the canoe, without which we could never have descended this part of the river on so frail a vehicle. We ran aground three or four times, and twice got entangled in the trees that hung over the stream; but fortunately escaped without accident. Perceiving a very dangerous place just below us, and being too near the shore to prevent the raft's being drawn into the whirlpool, we pulled in and landed on the bank immediately opposite to us. We then dragged the raft up, for about a hundred yards, assisted by the counter current that generally prevails near the edge of a rapid stream. By this precaution we got nigh enough to be able to make an offing sufficient to prevent being thrown upon another dangerous place we had seen below, composed of fallen trees, roots, &c. thrown up like an island, over which the water foamed in a cataract.

Not long after we had landed, I observed the

Karaikee examining with great attention the spot where we were and the surrounding mountains; and at length he began to pray and to cross himself with great fervency, the tears running down his cheeks in a stream! I approached him to inquire what was the cause of his emotion, when he exclaimed: "That is our mountain; our village is not far off, for on this spot I caught some hares last winter. I know that we are now not far from Grebay, a small Yakut village on the sea-coast, at the mouth of this river, which is called Cowvah, and only twenty versts from Towinsk. But a short distance below this is the branch on which Towinsk stands, emptying itself into the bay, about ten versts higher up; and if it had been earlier in the season we might have descended it with a raft; but I perceive the water is now too low to attempt it." It will be easier for my readers to imagine, than for me to express, the joy we all experienced at this cheering news. We therefore boiled our kettle, and made all the meat we had into soup, determined to have a feast after such a long term of short allowance. This, however, was only a comparative feast, as our whole stock amounted to a third of a swan and a teal.

Our repast finished, we pushed off our raft with great spirits, paddling with all our strength to obtain the midway channel, and avoid the dangers which, like Scylla and Charybdis, threatened on either hand. The current ran at the rate of eight or nine knots an hour, in turbulent eddies that twisted us round and round, in spite of our best exertions. We had, however, the good fortune to pass unhurt; but afterwards ran aground several times, and with great difficulty got the raft off, (by all jumping into the water,) and that not without injuring it materially.

Between two and three o'clock in the afternoon we found ourselves in a fine wide channel with a moderate current; and on a beach, not far below us, descried a man and two boys, mending a canoe. The effect the sight of human beings had upon us is not to be described. Every soul shed tears of joy; and, when these people approached with their canoe to assist us, it was impossible to resist the impulse, or to answer their questions. Our tears flowed in a stream, and we were all so unmanned, we could only reply to them by signs. The elder person proved to be a Yakut, whom I had known when I passed before. This good Yakut, when he re-

cognized me, jumped upon the raft, clasped me in his arms, and shed tears in abundance, exclaiming, "thank God! thank God! you are all saved." He informed me that the Tongusees having confessed their leaving us on the mountain, the old Chief, living near to Towinsk, had dispatched his son, with twenty-five head of reindeer, in search of us; and that every one there had given us up for lost, knowing how difficult it was to procure food on those deserted plains and mountains, in the spring of the year.

We towed the raft to the shore, his canoe and ours being sufficiently large to convey our baggage and ourselves two or three versts up a small arm of the sea to Grebay. Our miraculous escape, after having been left to starve in such a wilderness, was a matter of surprise to every one, and could not fail to excite in our breasts the sincerest sentiment of gratitude to the Almighty ruler of the world, for his watchful care and protection, in guiding us in safety once more to a human habitation. On inquiry, we found that had we taken any other route than the one we came, we must have inevitably perished!

The Yakut and his family could not behold our haggard, half-starved countenances, sun-

burnt and withered, without shedding tears. They treated us with the kindest hospitality, placing before us immediately the best their hut afforded, which was milk and dried fish. We ate voraciously.* I had great difficulty in restraining myself, as well as my people, from indulging too much at first; and I made the Yakuts take the food away. We ate a little at a time (at intervals, three times,) before nine o'clock, when we went to sleep.

At daylight on the following morning, (the 15th,) I was surprised by seeing a man enter my tent, who, I heard, had accompanied the person that went in search of us. He congratulated me on my wonderful escape, saying he had just returned from the mountain, where they had found all my baggage, carefully packed and sealed, as I left it! When he arrived there, which was about ten days after we had quitted it, the snow had all melted away, and not a trace or footstep remained to indicate the route

* The fish were dried salmon peel, that had been caught that season and cured in the sun without salt, as is customary with the natives of the country. They were truly delicious, and as our host had salt in plenty, this additional luxury, that we had not tasted for some time, gave them a double zest.

we had taken. They, therefore, gave up all idea of searching for us; and, taking the baggage down the mountain, left it in a secure place, well covered from the weather, near the horse-road leading to Ochotsk. His friend had then proceeded to that place, to inform the Governor of the accident. The twenty-five reindeer had been sent by the good old Chief of the first party of Tongusees we had hired on leaving Towinsk; and the son of the old Yakut undertook to guide them. It was a singular circumstance, also, that the canoe we found on the river side belonged to the same Tongusee Chief; his people having taken it there on sledges but a short time before, and placed it near the water, ready for their summer excursions after fish and game. I sent him a message, to let him know of our safe return, and of our having his canoe, that he might not be disappointed, and deprived of the use of it; a boat, in that country, on account of the labour and time necessary to make one, being extremely valuable. Thus did it please God, not only to save our lives, but every thing belonging to us; and the Yakut assured me, I might be able to get horses, when I should arrive at Inia, sufficient to carry my baggage to Ochotsk. He

seemed to think the Governor, Captain Minitsky, would probably send for it the moment he should hear of my being lost.

After having fed so heartily on the previous evening, I thought to have awaked on the 16th fresh and strong. On the contrary, I found myself extremely weak and languid; and my companions were little better; all of us being scarcely able to walk, and, after the least exertion, obliged to lie down and sleep. An old Yakut woman, who had only seven or eight cows, killed a yearling heifer at my request, as we were really in want of some nourishing food. In a place where domestic animals are so scarce, I could not but admire the moderation of the owner, who only asked fifteen roubles, and overpowered me with thanks when I gave her twenty-five, as well as generously supplying us with fresh milk, sour milk, and cream, as much as we could consume.

About ten o'clock, the good old Yakut, whose son had gone in search of us, arrived with some horses to take us twenty versts to Towinsk. He embraced us all with great seeming satisfaction; but, perceiving we were in a weak state, advised us to eat a dinner of good beef soup before we attempted the road.

Finding ourselves rather stronger after dinner, and taking an affectionate adieu of the excellent, kind people at Grebay, we set out for Towinsk, where we arrived in two hours, though so greatly fatigued that we went to sleep immediately after our arrival. Late at night the old man awoke us to eat supper; which we had scarcely swallowed, when we were again seized with a violent inclination to sleep, impossible to resist, and were wrapped in profound slumber until eight or nine in the morning of the 17th.

When I awoke I could scarcely rise, and was obliged to get myself rubbed all over, to relieve the pain and weariness I experienced. The whole human economy seemed quite disjointed and devoid of elasticity, and my nerves as languid as those of an infant. My companions were affected in the same way; which I ascribed not only to the severe fatigue we had suffered the last two days, but to the having been almost constantly wet, in pushing the raft over the shallows, and endeavouring to avoid the dangerous whirlpools, sands, and fallen trees, that frequently obstructed our passage.

This day the good old Tongusee Chief came to see me, whom I rewarded for his kindness by giving him some money, and a necklace of

handsome beads, with a red silk sash, (which I had preserved uninjured,) as a token of my friendship. He was highly gratified, and thought himself vastly overpaid. He blamed severely the unwarrantable act of inhumanity of those unprincipled rascals of the neighbouring tabboon, who had deserted us without sufficient cause, and exposed us to the chance of suffering all the horrors of starvation. The Chief of this last mentioned party also paid me a visit; he said his people had confessed their infamous conduct and repented of it; and that they declared I had always treated them in the kindest manner, but that the Cossack had beat and abused them without my knowledge. Indeed I had laboured to please them by giving them tea, sugar, and bread every day, till I had exhausted my stock; and had made one of my Chinese, who was a cook, boil and prepare their victuals in the best manner. If the Cossack had treated them roughly, they might have complained. None but the most savage and unfeeling wretches could have been guilty of such conduct as theirs.

I was treated with the kindest attention at Towinsk, where, after a while, I contrived to get rid of the vermin that infested my person, having had but two shirts with me when I left

the mountain, and having found it impossible to keep myself clear of the annoyance of lice,—the Karaikee bringing such a stock into the company that we literally swarmed with them.

I gave a little bit of sweet chocolate that remained to these kind people; so that I was now without any sweetening whatever to my tea; but it was infinitely more palatable since we had milk and cream in plenty. Having procured serannahs and salt at this place, I still felt the loss of sugar almost as much as the want of bread; but am still of opinion, that with a little use I could have lived perfectly well on vegetables, fish, and meat, without feeling severely the absence of the luxuries of civilized life. At every meal the old Yakut woman gave us each a small plate of curds and cream; and, in short, treated us with such affectionate attention as soon restored our enfeebled frames; for, although we had no bread, our food was nourishing.

On the 18th of June, finding ourselves sufficiently recovered to undertake the journey to Ochotsk, I begged the old Yakut to procure a sufficient number of horses, that we might, if possible, set out on the 20th. In the meanwhile he promised to get from the Tongusee Chief a fat reindeer, which, added to some dried fish,

seals' meat, a few pieces of beef, and some sour milk, would give us an ample supply for the road. I made shooting excursions almost every day, and seldom returned without bringing some ducks. We also went seal-hunting several times; but only killed one; which I regretted, as my companions seemed fonder of this meat than of beef. The worst meat we had tasted was the swan's flesh, that was so tough, hard, and dry, even after long boiling, one could hardly masticate it; and it seemed to possess less nutritive qualities than any other game I ever tasted.* The old Yakut informed me some of his horses were at a distance, but that they would be ready in a couple of days; and that he was determined to accompany me himself. I was much gratified by the old man's kindness, knowing him to be an experienced guide, who annually for thirty years past had made this journey. We could therefore have had, no one so well calculated to conduct us.

On the 20th of June the weather proved so bad it was impossible to set out. I was now fearful a party from Ochotsk would arrive and

* This was perhaps owing to the season of the year, as I had eaten of swans killed in the winter at Kamtchatka, and found the flesh very tender and good.

remove my baggage before I could get to it; for I was much in want of shirts, clothing, and razors; and moreover it was very difficult to keep myself free from vermin without the small stock of linen I possessed; whilst my beard had grown so long it became exceedingly hot and troublesome.

June 21 1811

On the 21st, though the morning was cloudy and threatened rain, I would remain no longer, and, taking an affectionate leave of my host's good family, departed. We were at Grebay by eleven o'clock, whither our friend and companion, the young Karaikee, had come from Amokthon to meet us, saying that he had caught some fine fish, which he should give us the following day as we passed through his village, that lay in our road. We staid but a few minutes at Grebay, and then crossed the river Cowvah, and remained at a small hut on the opposite side till the 22d, it being near nine at night before our horses were swum over. The Yakut woman of Grebay sent some cream and milk after us; and the men some nice fresh fish and fourteen gulls' eggs, which were a very acceptable addition to our stock.

We started again immediately after breakfast, and soon arrived at Amokthon, where our old

companion, the Karaikee, was rejoiced beyond measure to see us; having prepared a handsome present of fresh fish for our road, and being very anxious that I should remain a few hours at his hut. I persisted in continuing my journey, promising to send him from Ochotsk, a gun and plenty of powder and ball of which he was much in need. Indeed, I would have taken him with us, if his relations had consented; for he shed tears, and seemed quite afflicted at being obliged to quit the party.

We got early in the afternoon to the jourta of the good old Tongusee Chief, which lay in our road; and he immediately killed a fine fat deer, and would have killed two; but as this was sufficient to last us to the place of the next tabboon or herd, I refused to accept of another.

After dinner we continued our route along the sea-coast, and fell in with a small party, consisting of a soldier, his wife, three children, and an assistant, whom, as they seemed decent folks, and were entirely destitute of meat, I invited to join our party, and partake with us. I could not but compassionate the poor woman and three children, who had nothing but some sour milk and dried fish, with the chance of whatever fresh fish and game they might procure by the

way. We pitched our tents together on the beach at the mouth of a small rivulet, where my new companion spread his net, and, in a very short time, caught ten salmon peel, which he immediately brought to me.

The 23rd was a foggy, damp, disagreeable day, with small showers of rain at intervals. We made a halt for a few minutes, and then continued on, until eight or nine at night. My Yakut guide was extremely active and intelligent, and, though between fifty and sixty years of age, tied up the baggage, placed it on the horses himself, and seemed to possess as much vigour as a young man of five and twenty. I could not but draw a most marked comparison between him and my Cossack, a lazy indolent fellow, who always had the cunning to keep out of the way of being employed; and even required a servant to wait on him, being as helpless as a child. This night we encamped on the banks of a small rapid river, called by the Tongusees Mettaclay, and about a day and a half's journey from our mountain. The river we had descended, I found, on inquiry, was well known to the Towinsk people. Several of them had been there to make rafts of timber, and catch ducks and geese in the lakes, during

their moulting season, when they are easily knocked down with sticks.

It rained so hard on the 24th, it was impossible to move from our encampment, which we were not a little anxious to do, being greatly pestered by the mosquitoes and gnats, that attacked us in swarms.

On the 25th we made a long journey, but a disagreeable one, over steep mountains and heavy marshes; fatiguing our horses and ourselves excessively. We arrived close to our mountain that evening, and not far from the spot where my baggage was placed. I eagerly visited it on the morning of the 26th, to get my dressing-case, being greatly desirous to shave a beard forty-two days old. On coming to the place, we found the baggage carefully piled up, on a frame between two trees, ten or twelve feet from the ground. The trees were barked to prevent the bears climbing, and the materials were completely defended from the rain by a cover of bark and bushes, which had kept them as dry as if in a house. After taking the things that were necessary to my immediate comfort, we hurried back to our encampment, having been almost eaten up by the musquitoes and gnats, which, in the low grounds, under this

high mountain, were more numerous and blood-thirsty than I had ever experienced them.

Pursuing our journey again, about mid-day we discovered a small party of men, with fourteen or fifteen horses, approaching us. On coming up with them, we were rejoiced to find the old Yakut's son, and an under-officer at their head, who had been sent by the Governor of Ochotsk to make all possible search for me, and bring up the baggage. They informed me they had been four days from Inia, having made a very crooked course, expressly for the purpose of searching after myself and servants, imagining we were still somewhere in the wilderness. Having killed a mountain sheep by the way, they made me a present of a part of it, together with a few handfuls of black biscuit, which we divided amongst us all. I now pointed out to the old Yakut the course we took on leaving the mountain, and the place where we found the horse's hoof, burnt trees, &c. He informed me it was a horse-path he had made himself many years before; but that as it was not exactly in a direct course for Ochotsk, he had latterly frequented the one where we now were, a considerable distance to the south-west of the former.

We had made, whilst on foot, a route of between two and three hundred versts, the greater part of which, he believed, no human being had ever traversed but ourselves and the wild Tongusees; nor had any person, besides the natives, been so far up the river Cowvah. They had told him its source was in a mountain, called by them Dellochkan, seven hundred versts from the ocean; and we had floated upwards of five hundred versts on it in getting to the sea. They all considered our escape as most miraculous, since the course we had taken was the only one that could have possibly saved us from destruction.

On the 27th we had another disagreeable journey, over wet marshes and steep mountains, thickly covered with wood.

On the 28th we crossed Surkapskoy river, and the mountains of the same name, one of which was full ten versts over, and so steep we were obliged to perform its passage on foot. During the last two days we gathered a kind of bastard rhubarb, which we found growing in abundance, and when boiled extremely tender and palatable,* having a slight acid taste. It

* This is not the "Rheum Palmatum," or palmated rhubarb, used in medicine, which I have seen growing in

is not only an admirable antiscorbutic, but a very delicate wholesome vegetable, in every respect.

By four in the afternoon of the 29th we were over the highest mountain in that part of the country, called Inskoy mountain, the crossing of which we were likewise obliged to perform on foot. We arrived shortly after at a Tongusee Reindeer station, close by a branch of Inia river, where there was also a Yakut jourta; and there we got an ample supply of meat, fish, and milk. Our horses were obliged to swim across this branch, whilst ourselves and our baggage were transported in canoes.

By six in the evening we got to another branch, opposite to the village, where the Rus-

Europe. It may, however, be the root of the plant the Bucharians sell to the Russians, as well as the Chinese; though the Russian is most esteemed, perhaps owing to the careful manner in which it is received and examined at Kiachta. There an apothecary inspects what is purchased, who admits only the best quality to be brought to Russia. I found it in great plenty throughout the Eastern parts of Siberia. What I saw had roundish leaves streaked with reddish fibres, and did not grow high; indeed the greater part was quite the reverse. I observed particularly, that the leaves were not so uneven at the edges, nor so much tapering to a sharp point in parts, as the Turkish plant of the same species.

sian peasants who inhabit there, soon conveyed us across, and seemed not less surprised than pleased to see five persons whom they had considered as lost in the wilderness. They exerted all that genuine hospitality and kindness for which the Russian peasantry are so remarkable.

In a short time my tent, which I preferred inhabiting for coolness' sake, overflowed with liberal donations of fresh cream, milk, curds, serannahs, &c.; and I was much pleased at having it in my power to present them in return with some tea, whereof I had a good stock, and which, though unaccompanied with sugar, was a very acceptable gift to those poor people.

This last journey had fatigued us much, and I was besides so unwell that I determined to repose here until we should be recovered. In the meanwhile, I despatched an express to Governor Minitsky, informing him of my safety, and requesting some more horses, and some sugar, bread, &c. nothing of the kind being to be had at Inia.

On the afternoon of the 31st the under-officer and his party, whom we had met on the road, arrived with the rest of my baggage; and I now felt so far recovered, that I only awaited an answer from Ochotsk, to continue my journey.

Inia consists of about thirty houses and jourtas, containing fifty or sixty inhabitants, who possess about twenty horses and upwards of a hundred head of cattle. They felt, during this season particularly, the value of their cattle, fish having been exceedingly scarce; for even when I was there they did not catch more than five or six salmon a day; a fish which, in other years, came in immense numbers. It appeared to me, they were rather indolent, having contracted the Asiatic habit of sleeping much, and working little. Indeed it seems to me, that in high Northern latitudes, where nature is bound in frost and robed in white for many months in the year, man is as much devoted to *Somnus* and indolence, as he is in the hottest climate in India. During the cold season his faculties lie dormant, like the swallow, until the genial spring calls them again into action. This observation is intended to relate to those who live almost in a state of nature, and amongst whom industry and the arts have not fixed their abode, and changed by education the natural propensity to idleness and ease.

The weather was excessively hot during my stay here; and, the situation being low, musquitoes and gnats were as usual extremely trou-

blesome. On the road these insects attack you as fiercely as a wasp, leaving their stings where they strike. They are rather small, and quite different from the mosquitoes I have seen in any other countries. I was obliged to keep a cotton handkerchief, tied like a hood, over my face, and a leathern cap drawn over my ears, to defend myself from their attacks.

Having received a letter from my friend Captain Minitsky,* couched in the kindest manner, brought by a confidential person, and accompanied by an ample supply of every thing of which I could possibly stand in need, not to mention a pressing invitation to hasten to Ochotsk—I set out in the afternoon of the 2nd of July, and arrived safely on the 4th, at six in the evening.

* This gentleman had formerly served as volunteer on board of a British ship of war; and, having visited Canton with young Captain Tranbridge, I there first made his acquaintance, though at that time I never expected to see him in such a distant part of the world. Our meeting was, of course, as gratifying to me as it was novel and unexpected to him. Captain Minitsky has since been appointed to the government of Yakutsk, and is a man highly worthy, in every way, of the confidence of his government. The reader will see, from my description of Ochotsk, what his improving hand has done in Siberia.

CHAPTER XII.

Kind attentions experienced by the Author at Ochotsk—Description of that place—Magazines of warlike stores—Admiralty—Flour magazines—Remarks on the situation of Ochotsk—Preparations for prosecuting the journey to Yakutsk—The Author quits Ochotsk—Medvazia Golova—Appearance of the Country—Maitah—An accomplished resident there—Travelling method of making butter—Koneskoy mountains—River Ourak—The Yakut taste in horse flesh—Costume of the Yakuts and Tongusees—Ourasky mountains—Striking character of the scenery—Difficulties of the road—Yakut superstition—A begging party—Udomskoy Krest—Reflections on the means of water communication in Siberia—Remarks on the resources of the country.

I WAS received at Ochotsk with the sincerest congratulations on my escape, and almost overpowered with the kindest civilities and attention. Every little want or wish was anticipated; and the reader may easily imagine the pleasing effect this sudden transition must have had on a person just arrived from the dreary and inhospitable wilds of the Tongusee country. There I was not

only deprived of the luxuries, but of almost all the common necessaries of life; and had never expected to experience again the fond endearments of friendship and society. A few days' rest, and the hospitable attentions of Captain Minitsky and his amiable wife, soon recruited my strength, and perfectly reinstated my health.

I amused myself every day in examining Ochotsk and its environs. The town is composed of two hundred and thirty-five houses, having about one thousand four hundred male inhabitants, besides women and children. A considerable portion of them are sailors; and the place contains many convicts. It is situated in north latitude 59° 20′ 22″, and east longitude from St. Petersburgh 112° 53′ 00″ from Greenwich 143° 20′ 23″, on a small island that is, in fact, nothing but a sand-bank, three versts and three hundred paces in length. In breadth, at the narrowest part, it is only ten paces; increasing to two hundred, which is its greatest breadth, and forms the spot where the town stands. On the north it is bounded by the river Ochota; south by the sea of Ochotsk; east, by the Alarrikanskoy mountains, and the old channel; and west, by the new channel. But a few years ago, the river became choaked at the mouth, by

a more than ordinary quantity of ice. The strength of the stream not being sufficient to force it out by the usual channel, it sank to the bottom, and at length completely obstructed the egress of the waters. Thus repelled, they swelled to an enormous height, covering all the country round, and forced themselves at length through the sandy beach, by what is called the new channel, insulating the town on the spot I have already described. There is a new church at Ochotsk, extremely well arranged, and ornamented within; and although that, as well as the houses, is of wood, it is handsomely built, and very solid.

On the 10th I accompanied Captain Minitsky to look at the Admiralty, marine-stores, magazines, workshops, &c. which I found disposed in the most perfect good order, and prepared for service in the best possible manner, each branch being provided for, and in a way that did the Captain infinite credit. Many old hulks, that had been condemned to lie useless, have been transmuted by him into excellent magazines, where bread, tar, pitch, iron, nails, copper, lead, cordage, &c. are deposited in perfect safety. They are propped by shores, as a vessel on the stocks, but roofed like houses, having doors,

July 1813

windows, or air-holes cut in the sides, with stairs to them. Nothing can be more convenient; and it affords infinite pleasure and satisfaction, to see these poor sea-beaten vessels, no longer capable of resisting the waves, renovated and rendered almost as interesting as when they floated on the surface of the ocean. Indeed they may be said to form a complete *museum* of vessels, presenting curious specimens of antique ship building, from the commencement of the enterprises of the first Russian traders to the north-west coast of America, down to modern times.* All are in perfect good repair, and might, with the same care that is now taken of them, be preserved for ages. Though they are generally too short for their breadth, resembling the craft used in ancient times by the Dutch, some of the bottoms appeared remarkably well turned, and the whole very strongly put together.

The next thing that attracted my attention was a building called the Admiralty (in the middle of a large enclosure), in the centre and

* The last time I was at Ochotsk, in 1826, I was very sorry to learn that these vessels had been all broken up and destroyed. I saw with pleasure some fine new buildings, magazines, &c. built whilst Captain Ouskinsky was Chief, and which certainly do him great credit.

on the top of which is a cupola, serving for a light-house, that may be seen from a considerable distance at sea. In the Admiralty there is a school, and coopers', turners', and block-makers' shops; a large place where boats are built and repaired, together with a forge for the blacksmiths, and rooms for locksmiths, workers in brass, &c. Anchors are brought in pieces, over-land, some large enough for sloops of war, —and welded at these forges.* Yarns are also brought over land, and at the rope walk made up into cables, very well and expeditiously. Whilst I was there one was prepared for the frigate Diana, in the course of four or five days, and appeared quite as well made as a European cable. The anchors, I have been told, are not so strong, being apt, when let go on a rocky bottom, to break or crack in the welding.

I next visited the flour magazines, which were likewise in the most perfect order, and saw a number of the Yakut convoys arrive and discharge their loads there. They consisted generally of from ten to thirteen horses, having seldom more than two men to take care of them. Each horse carried on his back six poods weight

* Anchors are now always sent by sea.

of rye flour, packed in two leathern bags, called in Russian *sumas*, impenetrable to all sorts of weather, and extremely convenient for carriage; hanging one on each side of the horse. These bags are of green hide, without the hair; the flour is forced as tightly as possible into them while they are damp, and when dry the surface is as hard as a stone. On opening them the flour, for about half an inch deep, is attached in a hard cake to the bag, and if originally good, it is preserved in a very perfect state, and will keep for a great length of time. Some of them have been known to remain all the winter under the snow, without being damaged; nor can I conceive it possible to carry over-land this important article of life, by any other method, so safely and conveniently as in *sumas*. This season only about ten thousand horses, carrying liquor, flour, naval stores, and merchandise, arrived at Ochotsk; but in former times, when the trade to the north-west coast of America was free to every one, twenty to thirty thousand horses visited this place annually.

Before quitting the subject of Ochotsk, I cannot help saying that I think it totally unfit for a naval arsenal, being devoid of the first and most important requisite, that of a good port. No vessel

of any great burthen, carrying guns, can enter there, or be wintered there, without incurring the risk of being bilged by the ice of the Ochota.

The spot on which Ochotsk stands is a perfect honey-comb, through which the waters of the channel ooze at every instant. It is not possible to have a cellar, or any apartment under ground without its being filled immediately.* Judging by what has already happened, the place occupies a very dangerous position, and might suddenly be swept into the sea. If I were obliged to live there, I should, like our good old forefather Noah, build myself an ark ready to receive me when the floods should come. The inhabitants of Ochotsk may perhaps smile at this remark, because an intimacy with the most perilous situations renders them no longer terrifying. But for this sentiment of security, many of our best soldiers and sailors would cease to be such. A man argues from analogy, that if he escape danger to day, he may again tomorrow, and so on to the end of the chapter;

* Fresh water, for the consumption of the inhabitants, is brought in boats, every day, a very considerable distance; and, before Captain Minitsky's time, owing to neglect and bad management, they frequently suffered severely for want of it.

though his profession be considered by every body else as truly perilous. Habit will make people brave every thing; but it does not follow that their heads will not be shot off, or that they may not be drowned in the overflowing waters of the river Ochota.

Upon the opposite side is good *terra firma*, composed of solid unadulterated soil, producing excellent pasture for cattle, with clear wholesome water, nature's best beverage, close at hand; and that spot is of all places in the neighbourhood the best calculated for a town. Thither every thing should be removed, except a few fishing huts and sheds necessary to those who may be employed about the shipping; and thus, if an accident occurred, nothing of any great consequence could be destroyed.*

It cost me some days to furnish my baggage with leather coverings for the road, and to hire

* The town has been since removed, but not to the place I mentioned, and which is called the Boulgine. Its present situation is not quite so dangerous as the former, but it is very inconvenient, and involves the want of good water. Indeed, very good reasons might be brought forward to prove that it would be better, and more convenient, to have no naval arsenal at Ochotsk, but to build the vessels at St. Petersburg, and send them round the Cape of Good Hope.

Takut Yeemshicks,* and horses, to convey us one thousand and twelve versts to Yakutsk.

On the 19th of July, 1813, after dinner, we bade adieu to our kind friends at Ochotsk, and crossed the river to a fishing hut on the opposide, where our horses awaited us; those with the baggage having preceded us sometime before.

It began to rain, and we remained here all night, in hopes of having good weather on the following morning, but the bad weather continued, and, having miserable quarters, we departed on the 20th in the rain. I was accompanied by a young officer, named Ivan Ivanovitch Kruz, who was forest-master at the first stannock, or station, called Maitah, fifty-four versts off, where I promised to spend a day. When we got to *Medvazia Golova*,† only twenty-five versts, we were wet to the skin, and concluded to stop for better weather at a comfort-

* Throughout this part of Siberia, those who conduct sledges with dogs, or horses, and reindeer, are called *Yeemshicks*, a name that, in Russia, is only given to carriers and drivers of waggons, who are occupied in transporting goods across the country. The proper Russian name of a coachman, or driver, is *Izroschick*.

† Literally bear's head.

able Yakut hut. Here there was plenty of fish, milk, and liquor, called *Khoomiss*, for which the Yakuts are famous; and these were presented to us on our arrival. We remained with this hospitable family until the morning of the 21st.

Early on that morning, we crossed Malchikan and another mountain and river, called Jellokhone, breakfasting some versts off, at a Yakut hut, where we experienced the same kind treatment as before. Many parts of the road were wide and level enough to have driven a carriage on it. The country around was diversified with forests and meadows, occasionally intersected with small streams. Except immediately on the banks of the Ochota, where there were fine poplars, the woods were almost wholly composed of the *Pinus Larix*.* I, who had been recently in the habit of travelling on the Towinsk side over deep marshes or woody swamps, through which a man and horse could with difficulty make their way, and where the old paths were scarcely visible, found in this road,

* The larch tree, which is found in great abundance in the eastern parts of Siberia. On the banks of the rivers the water-ash, and aspens, or tremblers, are the trees most generally met with, though there are occasionally some fine poplars.

where upwards of ten thousand horses annually pass and repass, a very pleasing contrast.

It rained very hard again, and gave us a good soaking ere we arrived at the residence of my companion, with whom I staid until after dinner on the 22d. Maitah, is the first post station, fifty-four versts from Ochotsk, on the banks of the river Ochota. There are twenty-three horses stationed here by the government, with a *Smuttretel*, or overseer of the post. My young companion entertained me in the most hospitable manner. He was a very good botanist, and understood French and Latin; a modest, sensible, genteel young man; and, what appeared a little singular, declared he was perfectly happy, and satisfied with his situation. Even in those remote regions he filled up his leisure hours with study and the chase, and never found the time hang heavy on his hands. I approved very much of his sentiments and mode of living, and could only regret that the eastern parts of Siberia do not possess many more such valuable inhabitants. Around this station there are several rich Yakuts, some of whose jourtas I visited, and found them well built and cleaner than the habitations of the Karaikees and Tongusees. These people hav-

ing plenty of cattle, I procured, for my journey, a good stock of milk, butter, &c. which I carried after the Yakut manner, in two leathern bags, made of horse-hide, and called *simmire*. The Yakuts mix sour milk and cream together in those bags, which, after one has travelled a few hours on horseback, becomes butter and butter-milk; the butter collecting in small lumps, from the size of a pea to that of a marble. A Yakut drinks the butter and butter-milk together, or eats the butter in handfuls with his boiled meat, oftentimes in such quantities as, were I to relate it, would exceed belief! I found, however, by experience, when on the Towinsk road, that butter and sour butter-milk eaten together are much lighter on the stomach than butter eaten in the usual way. Indeed, the sour butter I could eat more of, without feeling cloyed, than of the ordinary sort.

I quitted my kind young host after dinner, and, proceeding on about twenty versts, crossed a high ridge, called *Koneskoy*, or horse-mountains. We were ferried over the river Ourak, that runs at their base in the evening, and after making a few versts of progress on its banks, and shooting a couple of fine black cocks, I pitched my tent for the night.

During the afternoon we had met several convoys of horses, carrying flour, liquor, &c. to Ochotsk, to the number of eighty or a hundred. Two of these convoys having stopped to pass the night close to our encampment, my Yakuts kept a strict watch until the following morning, fearful of having some of their horses stolen. On inquiry I found those people were in the habit of stealing horses for food, whenever a good opportunity offered, being fonder of horse-flesh than any other; so that when two strange convoys encamp together, they are obliged to watch one another, being extremely artful and expert in thieving. Those who get possession of a horse contrive to decamp suddenly, and ride several versts off, when they kill the animal, bury his bones, and conceal the flesh in their bags, before the person robbed discovers the theft. They are men generally of small stature, light, and very active, when they choose to exert themselves, indefatigable on the road, and surpassing every other people in conducting and taking care of horses. In features they resemble strongly the people of the province of Nankin, in China. The Tongusees, on the other hand, bear a striking resemblance to the Tartars, who have conquered China. I had the additional proof of this by

means of my two Chinese servants, who were born in Canton, and had seen many of the Pekin Tartars, and were themselves struck with the likeness between them and the Tongusees. They always called each other *brats* (which means, in Russian, brothers) when they met. The Tongusees and Yakuts dress much alike, particularly the women, wearing abundance of ornaments. Their hair, that hangs in two or three braids behind, is stuck over with small copper or silver plates, more or less rich, in proportion to the fortune of the wearer. Sometimes a silver or copper plate is placed on the forehead. They occasionally wear a close cap, likewise adorned with plates and beads, and often ornament their boots with beads of various colours, having much the appearance of the work on the Wampum belts of the North American savages. The costume of the Tongusee men is a close coat, sitting tight round the body, with skirts reaching half way down the legs, and resembling what is called in England a frock coat. It is composed of deer's or dog's skin, with the hair turned inside. If very cold, they have other shorter ones to put over these, as well as parkas and kokelankas, or riding coats. The latter is a dress like a parka, only shorter and double. The

hair of one dress being turned next the skin, and the hair of the other outside, the wearer acquires a very wild appearance. These dresses are, however, extremely comfortable, and keep out the cold most effectually. They are nothing more than a loose sack of skins with sleeves reaching below the knees. The Yakut dress is made in the same way, and is generally of horse or cow hide, with the hair next their skin.

Our journey of the 23rd lay along the banks of the Ourak. That river runs through a small valley between two ridges of stupendous elevation, extremely steep, called Ourakskoy mountains. A shallow and rapid stream, in summer dividing into various branches, which the traveller frequently crosses and re-crosses, is beautifully wild and romantic. In other parts the awful grandeur of the mountains, towering to the clouds, is particularly striking. The valleys and the islands are well wooded with poplars, pines, willows, and ash.*

July 13

* In the autumn of 1826, when returning from Kamtchatka, we crossed the ferry, and encamped for the night luckily on a high spot of ground. In the night it began to rain, and our astonishment was beyond description to find, when we awoke the next morning, the coun-

During this day we met several convoys of horses, a postman, and a Yakut merchant driving a herd of cattle to sell at Ochotsk. At five in the afternoon the sky blackened, we heard thunder at a distance, and shortly afterwards it set in to rain extremely hard, wetting us to the skin ere we could get a few versts off, where there was pasture for the horses, and we might pass the night. My Yakut guide informed me that whenever the wind was east or to the southward and eastward, blowing from the sea, it always rained in abundance, oftentimes in such heavy showers, swelling to such a height the rapid streams that flow from the mountains, as to render these impassable, and oblige one to wait the return of fair weather. Then, owing to their extreme rapidity, they subside almost as suddenly as they had swelled. The roads in many parts were so soft and muddy, it was impossible to go fast. They were cut into ridges by the horses' hoofs, at equal

try all about us overflowed, and only a spot of about thirty or forty yards in circumference left dry for us. The rain continued for six days in succession, during which time we were obliged to remain on that spot. What made it more unpleasant was, that I had my wife and child with me, also travelling on horseback.

distances, corresponding with the length of their steps at a slow walk. These they follow very regularly, though it certainly requires a horse that has been accustomed to such roads to carry a burthen over them and proceed, in safety, often through thick forests and swamps. Frequently the roots of the trees are thrown up on the surface, and so interwoven that there is barely room for a horse to place his hoof between them. Notwithstanding this, the animals contrive to step in the old paths, seldom fall, and get through with fewer accidents than might have been expected. During the morning of the 24th one of our poor animals, a fine young mare, about four years old, that followed the convoy, wounded herself so severely by running a sharp stake into the thigh, that the Yakuts were obliged to kill her. Although a great loss to them, I observed they bore it very philosophically; consoling themselves by saying they should have very delicious fare for many days. They stripped off her skin, and then detached the flesh nicely from the bones, leaving them and the offal in the road.

About eleven in the day we passed a ford called Plotebishefs, oftentimes a ferry, where there are two or three houses, and an under-officer, with seven or eight Cossacks stationed.

Here we stopped and drank tea. After leaving this place we experienced a heavy shower of rain, but found shelter under the shady poplars on the banks of the Ourak. We crossed and re-crossed the Ourak four or five times, and at night encamped on its banks. I shot here a brace of fine heath-cocks, nearly as large as turkies.

On the following morning the (25th) we pursued our journey over roads much more deeply cut than any we had yet encountered, and obliging us to proceed at a very slow pace. We met two convoys of flour, and a large herd of cattle. We travelled to the source of the Ourak, crossed three very steep mountains, and descending, passed a large lake, the source of the river Udama, surrounded by mountains, and three or four versts in length. On the trees that skirted the road, at the tops of these mountains, I observed a considerable quantity of horse-hair, tied in little bunches to the branches, which my guide informed me were offerings to the gods of the mountains, made by the Yakuts who had crossed them without accident. Shortly after this we stopped to dry our mats and our tents, it having rained hard in the night and wet them, so that they were both heavy and uncomfortable to the horses.

Just as I had mounted my horse to quit the spot, I perceived a straggling party of men, six of whom coming up towards me, I prepared my pistols, thinking they were robbers; but on approaching, they pulled their hats off, and, saluting me respectfully, began to beg. Although they were not exactly *then* what I suspected them to be, it appeared they had been so in former times; for they were a number of convicts, under the charge of some Cossacks, going to Ochotsk.

On the 26th, early in the forenoon, we got to Udomskoy Krest, which I passed, and crossed the river immediately, after getting some beef and milk, and then proceeded on my journey. Udomskoy Krest* is in north lat. 66° 5′ 30″, and east long. from St. Petersburg 159° 56′ 30″. The Udama is a fine river, and, though not abundant either as to fish or water in summer, is plentifully supplied with both in spring and autumn, and then navigable for boats of a considerable size. It falls into the Maia; the Maia flows into the Aldan, and the Aldan into the Lena.

The latter river passes from its source near

* Udom's Cross; krest being the Russian for cross.

the Baikal sea, on the borders of China, to within about three hundred and fifty versts of Irkutsk, and empties itself into the frozen ocean. It is consequently evident that water-carriage, for the transportation of goods, &c. may be had to within the distance of only one hundred and fifty versts from Ochotsk, by paying proper attention to the season of the year, when the waters are high. The reader will perceive, that from Udomskoy's Krest water conveyance may be had by the rivers before designated to within one hundred and eighty versts of Irkutsk, the capital town in the centre of Siberia.* Indeed if flat bottomed steam-boats were made use of (which have been adopted with the greatest success almost throughout Europe), it would be possible to mount the streams in question all the summer through. Such boats drawing very little water, they will readily proceed over the shallows, and with the more ease when the waters are low, as the currents are then less rapid. The steam-boat, in-

* Our best water-carriage however would be down the Shilka from Nerchinsk into the river Amour, whither all the flour might be sent in barrels or boxes, and arrive at Kamtchatka in a month after it was shipped, as fresh as possible, and at a trifling expence. Yet, as the river Amour is within the boundaries of China, there is no knowing whether we should be suffered to navigate it.

deed, puts us in possession of a power sufficient to oppose every obstacle of the latter nature. This most useful and admirable invention cannot be too strongly recommended for adoption in Siberia, and particularly on the river Lena. In a country where the population is thin, and manual labour very dear, the transportation of goods, even by water, is extremely expensive; besides occupying many people at that work who might, if steam-boats were in use, be employed in agriculture; since a tenth part of the men necessary in ordinary navigation would then suffice. If they were only established on the Lena at first, and in the province of Tobolsk, for the conveyance of salt from the saline lakes, the government would immediately perceive the great benefit to be derived from them. The expence of building one, on the Lena, would be repaid in two or three years, as it would take on freight all the merchandize to be sent from Irkutsk to Yakutsk, and *vice versa*, and would possess the power of performing two, or perhaps three voyages in a season; while ordinary vessels now with difficulty perform one.*

* At Tobolsk there are constantly an immense number of vessels destroyed which cannot remount the stream;

Although many objections may perhaps be advanced against the probability of continuing the water-communication by the Aldan and the Maia to Udama Krest, I cannot cede my opinion until I see much better proofs than those I have read on the subject; for it appears that persons who attempted the rivers in question did not undertake the voyage at the proper season. There are few instances where human industry and perseverance are not crowned with success.

Nature in Siberia is profusely grand and magnificent, marking those remote regions with inviting attractions to human industry and improvement, and giving the strongest indications of their becoming, ere long, the most flourishing countries of his Imperial Majesty's dominions. Those who are ignorant of their value have very unjustly styled them an ungrateful wilderness. I therefore feel particular pleasure in attempting to rescue this superb portion of nature's work from an unmerited reproach, and in assuring our august Emperor that it forms a branch of his empire that amply merits his benign protection.

and the forests have been almost all cut down in the vicinity of the salt lakes, to supply the timber for building them. Some such plan as that in question must be adopted, or the forests will soon be exhausted.

It cannot be denied that there are some parts of Siberia totally incorrigible, owing to the severity of their climates, bad soil, and other causes; but I firmly assert, without the fear of contradiction, that the most considerable portion of that country possesses native resources, soil, and climate, very superior to what is generally believed even in Russia, — and that it would advance rapidly, were it well governed and better peopled.

CHAPTER XIII.

Course of the party along the river Okkatchan—Okkatchanskoy mountains—The Kaiyan lakes—Gnats and mosquitoes—Horse-flesh a Yakut delicacy—A remarkable mountain—Ice in summer—A sublime scene—Mootins Krest—Somniferous cataracts—Post-station of Allachkune—Lofty mountains—Their effect on the beholder—Bad travelling—The white River—A visit from the wolves—Danger from shaking bogs—River Aldan—Colony of exiles—Reflections on the custom and policy of banishment to Siberia—General character of Siberian scenery—Conjurer's lake—Mindiginskoy mountain—River Amga—Mildagaia—Visit by invitation to a Yakut jourta—Lake Cherropchee—Native method of mowing grass—Yakut fisheries—A canoe of peculiar lightness—Lake and station of Borrodoy and of Tchatcheekni—Encampment of soldiers—Passing of various lakes and stations—Good qualities of the horses—Village of Yarmanka—Arrival at Yakutsk.

Our road in the afternoon, after passing a large tract of country wooded with the *pinus laryx*, lay along the river Okkatchan, whose beautiful and romantic banks, crowned with stately poplars, ash, and birch, were particularly

pleasing when contracted with the dreary forests of pine we had just passed. Nothing could exceed the grandeur and beauty of the prospect as we crossed the Okkatchanskoy mountains, and passed the lakes called by the Tongusees, Kaiyan; three of which are seen at one *coup d'œil*, forming a peculiarly novel and striking landscape. These lakes, four in number (some of them perfect basins), are situated on the top of the ridge, and surrounded by mounds which appear purposely placed there by nature to form the concave beds in which their placid waters repose. The mountains were so steep it was necessary to pursue a spiral road round the one we ascended, which method was extremely pleasing, as the traveller thus not only finds the ascent much easier, but a varied prospect at every step. We encamped in the evening on the banks of the river Okkatchan, about ten versts from the lakes.

On the morning of the 27th we continued along the left bank of the same river, which, for a considerable distance, is formed by a steep mountain, giving a view of all the country round, as well as of the various windings of the river bathing its base. After descending the mountain we had a large extent of pine-forest to pass,

where the gnats and mosquitoes were almost insupportable. The gnats were so small, and in such clouds, we inhaled them with our breath; the horses suffered exceedingly from them, their noses being filled, and running a stream of blood. My servant and myself, riding on briskly a-head, very inconsiderately lost sight of our party in taking a road to the right instead of the left; and we got several versts out of the way before we discovered the mistake we had committed. We wandered about for two or three hours, halloing aloud to try to make our friends hear, but in vain. Perceiving we were in the vicinity of the mountains that skirted the valley on the right, I determined to ride directly across to those on the opposite side, and a short time after had the good fortune to discover a path, where the fresh track of the horses convinced us our companions had just passed. In less than half an hour we overtook them, riding slowly along, and not having heard our voices, but supposing we had ridden only a little a-head. We must however have been a considerable distance from them; otherwise in these echoing forests we could not have failed to hear the Yakuts, who are in the habit of cheering their horses by crying aloud the word *khaude* very frequently.

Having had a heavy shower of rain, with a northerly wind, making us cold, wet, and uncomfortable, we stopped early; which I observed pleased exceedingly my Yakuts, who said they were anxious to boil a large portion of their mare's flesh, to keep it from spoiling. For my own part, I should have been much more pleased if it had indeed been spoiled. This superfluous stock the Yakuts devoured between their ordinary meals, added to a quantity of butter and sour milk; thus overloading their stomachs while this provision lasted, and making themselves quite lazy and stupid. Our old guide generally crammed his bosom and his pockets full of boiled mare's flesh, which he ate on horseback the moment we commenced travelling, after breakfast; until, surcharging his stomach, he became so drowsy, that he often fell asleep, and constantly was in danger of tumbling from his horse.

On the morning of the 28th, leaving the river for a while, we crossed a high mountain, called Anpar, and passed a small circular lake at the foot of a mountain, called Capitansky Zassika, and which, though I did not stop to examine it particularly, I have been assured, from the very best sources, is almost wholly composed of a

reddish-coloured porphyry of a very fine sort, which, if it were placed near a navigable river, would be extremely valuable. In the afternoon we crossed a part of the bed of the Okkatchan, on the ice, that was then near a foot thick. It covered a large beach several versts in extent, where it had been left dry, the waters returning into two small channels forty or fifty yards wide, and only a little above the horses' knees. I observed the ice was shaded during the greater part of the day by a steep mountain forming the bank on that side, which accounts for its having resisted the heat of summer.* The Yakuts informed me there were several spots on that river and the river Anchakan, situated in the same way, where the ice never thawed completely, a considerable portion constantly remaining from year to year.

By mid-day we crossed a steep mountain, and passed a lake called by the Tongusees Sargattaloch. This lake is the source of two rivers, the Okkatchan and Anchakan, that run out of it

posite directions; and we descended along the banks of the latter, where, however, there

* I passed this road twice afterwards, once going back to Kamtchatka in 1818, and again returning from thence to Russia in 1826, and always found the ice much in the same state as I first saw it in 1813.

was but a narrow road, between the river and the base of a very high ridge, called Anchakanskoy mountains. The grandeur and sublimity of this scene, its wildness and simplicity, excited my astonishment and admiration. Nature there, however, wore rather an impoverished garb. An arid soil prevailed in the narrow valley; and the rocky mountains, for the most part unadorned with forests, rose in gloomy majesty to the clouds. We crossed a spot of this river on the ice, two or three versts in length, in the manner before described; except that I found the latter about eighteen inches thick, though it was very rotten, and soft on the top, and the horses sunk above their hoofs.

At sun-set we encamped at a place called Mootins Krest, about twelve or fifteen versts from Allachkune, where there was a post-station and some Yakuts, and where I meant to rest my horses, and get a fresh supply of milk. Although we were several versts from the river, we were lulled to rest by the murmuring sound of one of its cataracts. It must have been a very considerable one, from the distinct manner in which we heard it at that distance; and I regretted exceedingly the not having been able to visit the spot, on account of an almost impassable

bog intervening, too dangerous to be attempted on horseback, and which I was too much fatigued to undertake on foot.

We set out very late the following morning, having overslept ourselves. This I found was always the case near the cataracts of the rivers —a fact I could not account for at first, until I recollected the somniferous effect of the sound of water running over a rough bed.

Passing several mountains, we came to a large lake, called Allach, and, proceeding along a river of the same name, soon arrived at the Stannock, or post-station, called Allachkune. It consists of a house, for the Smuttretel * and his family, a magazine for storing baggage, &c. and some Yakuts' jourtas; and is situated in a beautiful spot on the banks of the river Allach, that here flows through a narrow valley, surrounded by a rampart of high mountains, well covered with forests. I found the river very low and forded it, as we had done many others, at places which, in the spring, are deep and rapid. Indeed most of the rivers of Siberia are affected in this way;

* Director or overseer of the post-station, to whom the hire of the post-horses is always paid, and who takes care that you are well and expeditiously served. Since I was there first this place is much improved, and its inhabitants increased.

and the lesser ones (which, literally speaking, are mountain-torrents,) by every shower of rain. There was plenty of water-fowl on the lake; and, whilst I remained, I shot several ducks, and procured from the Yakuts milk, butter, and beef, as much as we wanted.

The mountain that surrounded Allachkune offered mountain-sheep, reindeer, moose-deer and the small musk-deer. I purchased beef merely to make soup; for although our party amounted to seven, I kept them constantly supplied with game; meeting every day with ducks, black game, squirrels, &c. in abundance.

We left this place on the morning of the 1st of August, my guide informing me we had several of the highest mountains of that part of Siberia to cross, which it would cost us two or three days to perform, as some of them were so steep that we should be obliged to walk. The first we ascended, by the course of the small river Akra, was one of the Sem Khreptoff, or Seven Mountains, also called by the Yakuts Cettadavan. These, as well as several others in their neighbourhood, are entirely composed of black slate rock of a good quality; but being far from water-carriage, in a country thinly peopled, they are, like many other valuable objects

in Siberia, neglected. We descended from the summits of the Seven Mountains, along the course of a most wild, romantic, and beautiful stream, called by the Tongusees Queuinquee. It forces a winding passage through a deep chasm between the mountains, leaving a narrow strip on either side, barely wide enough for a horse-path. Above this path are steep, broken, and impending cliffs, which are covered with moss, and crowned with forests. The waters either rush swiftly in murmuring eddies over a rough bed, or violently burst in cataracts through cleft rocks, making the country round re-echo to their roar, and forming a most picturesque and enchanting scene. The traveller is filled with terror as well as admiration on beholding the immense ramparts that rise around him to the skies, moulded into uncouth and curious shapes, and covered with a tremendous foam above his head. In other parts the whole body of the stream fell suddenly in cascades of fifteen to twenty feet; and, in short, the result was such an endless variety of cataracts and waterfalls, surprising and charming the beholder at every step, as I have no where seen in the course of any river.

After passing the Seven Mountains, we came

to another, the highest and steepest of all Siberia, called by the Yakuts, Unikan; and, as we were obliged to lead our horses, we were completely tired ere we attained its summit, towering above the clouds. Being elevated beyond all the rest, we had a view to an immense distance around, where there was not a plain or valley near enough to be distinguished! Rough, misshapen heaps appeared on every side, thrown up in such huge broken forms, I could compare their aspect to nothing but that of a boisterous ocean. Let the reader imagine a liquid earth, in monstrous agitation, moved by a mighty tempest, with mountains for the waves, rearing up their rocky uncouth heads to the skies, and in this rude form consolidated;—he may then bring to his mind's eye the prospect from the summit of Unikan.* Nor could I help fancying it resembled that chaos from whence the Omnipotent bade our incomparable globe to start forth, and assume the varied and pleasing form that now delights our eyes with its endless novelty. We

* The last time I crossed Unikan was in the autumn of 1826, and I found some yellow rhododendrons on the very pinnacle of the mountain. I collected the seeds and sent them to Mr. Fisher, the Director of the Imperial Botanic Garden at St. Petersburgh.

descended by the course of a rivulet of the same name, and over the worst roads that can well be imagined. At the mountain foot the horses were half-leg deep in mud; and in other spots sharp pointed stones so thickly covered the way, the poor animals frequently wounded their feet and legs in spite of the best precautions.

Our road for the greater part of the day was over a narrow valley, bounded by uninteresting heaps of rocks without trees, and the soil every where appearing of the very worst description. We found the river Unikan increase in size, and, after having our eyes fatigued so long with a barren prospect, had them relieved towards evening by the sight of some forests and a perpendicular cliff, composed of uneven rocks, in various fantastic forms, resembling fortresses, turrets, castles, ruins, &c. with trees and shrubs growing from their crevices, the lively green of which formed a beautiful contrast with the various-coloured rocks from whence they grew. The river flowed clear and rapid at its base, and I was so much delighted, I stopped a considerable time to contemplate the surrounding beauties, of which no adequate impression can be conveyed in words.

Leaving this place we crossed the Chokonskoy

mountains, and encamped near the small river Chokony.

On the 2d of August we pursued our journey over another large mountain, known by the name of Chakdall, and descended it along the banks of a stream of the same name. Our road was shockingly bad, both rocky and muddy, and the country around mountainous, bare of trees, wild, barren, and uninteresting. We stopped for the night on the banks of Baley Raka,* or White River, about fifteen versts from Tschorney Lesse (Black Forest), a post-station, which we were unable to reach on account of the badness of the road. This circumstance obliged the Yakuts to keep a strict watch during the night over their horses, having stopped at a place known to be much infested by wolves.

After breakfast, on the 3d, we traversed another high mountain, arriving at the station about mid-day, where I procured hens' eggs, berries, and other refreshments. I mention the hens' eggs, as

* The name of this river is remarkably appropriate: for, the bottom being covered with white stones, and the water being generally very clear, the stream is made to look like milk. This river is excessively rapid, and swells enormously in the spring. Within the last eleven years it has torn away the banks at the ford for a great distance, and in some other parts fully three versts.

there are so few domestic fowls in the eastern parts of Siberia, that those ovarious luxuries are very rarely met with until you arrive at Yakutsk. There is but one house at Tschorney Lesse; but some versts off, on the opposite side of the river, at another station, named Ouloonochk, there are several houses. All this day we travelled along the mountainous banks of Baley Raka, over extremely bad roads; and in the evening pitched our tent on a level spot, in the neighbourhood of some very high mountains, thickly covered with forests, where the Yakuts informed me the wolves were very numerous, and begged I would fire off my gun two or three times before I went to sleep, to frighten them from approaching the horses. I complied with their request; but was sorry to find, on the following morning (the 4th) two of our best horses were rendered incapable of carrying their burthens, from the attacks of the wolves. Fortunately our number of horses amounted to sixteen, some of them not loaded, so that we were enabled to place the baggage those two had carried on the backs of others. One of them had the ham-muscle of the thigh completely severed; and the other was wounded severely in two or three

places. As they were two valuable horses, I could not prevail upon the Yakuts to kill them; and these poor beasts were driven a considerable distance, through thick swamps, marshes, and the worst possible roads, without any thing to staunch their wounds. I did not suppose they could have survived it; but they kept up with us remarkably well, and the Yakuts assured me, if they got them past the Aldan, where there was better travelling, they would be able to save them.

We crossed the Baley Raka at a ferry, about half a verst wide, where there is a hut, and a couple of men, stationed to assist travellers; and we stopped in the evening a few versts off, though we with difficulty found a dry spot for our tent. The Yakuts requested me to give them some beef to make soup, having consumed the mare in eleven days, which, when we consider they were only three in number, and were amply supplied with game, brown biscuit, rye flour, milk, and butter in addition, was carrying gluttony to a very high pitch. In short, they ate from morning till night whilst the mare's flesh lasted. My servants informed me, they had known them several times rise, in the mid-

dle of the night, to make a fire and cook another supper.*

Our journey on the 5th was through thick swamps, and over deep marshes, the horses oftentimes falling into large holes, from which we with difficulty extricated ourselves and them, often being covered with mud. Occasionally we met with marshes over which were built bridges, and which formerly, I was told, were almost impassable. There are many shaking bogs on this road, where, previously to the construction of those bridges or wooden causeways, many horses with their burthens have been seen to disappear all of a sudden, and perish without the possibility of being saved. Although these causeways are very numerous, and some of them five to seven versts long, yet there must be many more constructed before the road will be quite safe.

Early in the afternoon we arrived at the large river Aldan, which was here very deep, and

* Although the Yakuts eat a great deal when they have a plentiful stock, and indeed often consume it in an improvident manner; yet, when food is scarce, they can live on as little as possible, being almost equal to the Tongusees in the capacity for supporting fatigue and hunger.

about a verst and a half wide, abounding with sturgeon, sterilits,* and other fine fish, and which is one of the largest tributary streams that falls into the Lena. At the ferry there are some houses, magazines, &c. constructed by Government, close on the bank of the river, which is very elevated, and commands a magnificent prospect of the course of the Aldan for a considerable distance on either hand. I could not behold this beautiful river without lamenting that its banks were not more thickly peopled, and its crystal waters covered with vessels. It is, however, but one of the very many fine rivers which pour their waters into the Lena, itself one of the largest and safest navigable rivers of the globe.

After passing to the opposite side of the river Aldan, we found there an establishment similar to that on the Ochotsk side, where likewise there are a number of jourtas, and where post-horses are stationed. Behind a large body of meadows, on the declivity of a hill, exposed to the south, we saw several jourtas beautifully situated, and, on inquiry, I was informed they contained a colony of banished men, sent thither by order of

* The sterilits of the Aldan are the finest flavoured of all Siberia.

the Government. They appeared very well off, having comfortable dwellings, cattle, &c. They certainly had few luxuries; but, with common industry, living on the banks of a river abounding with fish and game, and where there was good soil and fine pastures, they could never want for the necessaries of life unless too indolent to procure them. Those people call themselves Posselleneies, or colonists, and are styled in Siberia, Neshchastnie Loodie, or unfortunate people; no banished man, though he be a convict of the description, being ever called in that country by a name that can wound his feelings so as to remind him of crimes for which he is already supposed to have been punished, or degrade him in the opinion of the public. This shows not only very sound policy, but a proper delicacy of the Governors towards the feeling of these poor people; a delicacy highly commendable, as, by throwing a veil over their past crimes, they not only make them forget what they have been, but induce them to emulate the very many examples before them of retrieved criminals, who have become honest, industrious, good subjects.

Banishment to such a country as Siberia, then, is certainly no such terrible infliction, except to a Russian, who, perhaps of all beings

upon earth, possesses the strongest attachment to the soil on which he grows—taking root like the trees that surround him, and pining when transplanted to another spot, even though it should be to a neighbouring province, better than his own. Too much praise cannot be bestowed on the humane system adopted by the Russian Government in saving the lives of criminals without distinction, and transporting them to Siberia, to augment the population of a fine country much in want of inhabitants, where their morals are strictly watched, and where they soon become useful, good people. Death is, in fact, so transitory a punishment, that unless a man has religion and a perfect idea of rewards and penalties in the world to come, it may have no terrors for him; nor will its anticipation ever prevent the commission of crimes so well as the idea of banishment and long suffering. I would not be thought to be the advocate of cruelty; on the contrary I warmly espouse the principle of producing a perfect contrition, and change of sentiments and actions in the criminal, ere we send him into the presence of his God. To bring about this in an effectual manner, and be satisfied it springs from a thorough conviction of his error, we must not confine him

in chains, with a priest praying at his side, until the moment he is launched into eternity. He should be made, as he generally is in Siberia, so far a free agent as to have the power of again doing wrong; else his firmness and resolution are never put to the test; nor can that repentance be called sincere which springs from the imperious necessity of immediately making his peace with his offended God, before whose awful tribunal his merciless Government sends him suddenly to appear, with all his crimes fresh upon him.* Having seen the good effects of the penal code of Russia, what I say on the subject is no more than what truth and justice demand; and I wish for humanity's sake that so bright an example, which sheds a ray of unsullied glory on her Sovereigns, may be followed with equal success by every nation of the earth.

We departed from this place, on the 7th, having staid a day to rest our poor wounded horses. The roads were much better than we

* In Siberia there are certainly instances where convicts have again committed crimes, and some of them murder: these are confined to the mines for life. There are however but few examples of this sort; the majority of the convicts acquiring habits of industry and good conduct superior to the same class of people in Russia.

had experienced on the other side of the Aldan, there being a number of bridges, such as before described, over the marshy places, which otherwise would have been extremely difficult to pass. Our travelling was thus greatly facilitated.* We soon found ourselves thirty versts off at a post-station called Nokhow, where there are also several lakes, called Nokhowsky lakes, situated in a fine valley, bounded on one side by a ridge of hills, well covered with woods, and the whole forming a group of hills, meadows, and forests, charmingly disposed by nature to intesest the beholder. It is in Siberia, alone, that the traveller finds, not only the most wild, romantic landscapes it is in the power of fancy to conceive, but also the most grand and magnificent prospects, peculiar to itself. Nature is there presented in such stupendous and awful grandeur, as fills the mind with a mixed emotion of terror and admiration difficult to describe, and such as none but those uncommonly sublime objects are calculated to inspire. The rich scenes of industry and improvement produce

* Since my first journey through Siberia these bridges or causeways have been increased to an immense number, and have rendered passable many spots before very dangerous.

quite a different effect, and, though highly gratifying and interesting, do not disturb the tranquillity of the soul, whilst those I have attempted to delineate, cause an agitation beyond what is pleasurable, from their being too vast for human comprehension easily to embrace. Such scenes arrest the trembling pen of him who would attempt to describe them.

At night we encamped on the declivity of a hill, overlooking a small lake, so thickly frequented by ducks and teal, that I was enabled to shoot several of them during the evening.

The following morning (the 8th) we set out early. We passed a very beautiful lake, called by the Yakuts, Oyunekueil, and by the Russians, Shammanskoy Osier, or conjuror's lake; also the Mindiginskoy mountain; and several marshes having bridges over them, such as before mentioned; and we arrived at the ferry, on the river Amga,* early in the afternoon. This river runs through a rich soil, is deep and safe, about half a verst wide where we crossed, and, I was told, abounds with fish of the same

* On the banks of this river there is now a colony of Russian peasants, who cultivate rye, barley, and wheat, with great success. Indeed these have been tried at the ferry on the Aldan, and were found to succeed.

kind as are caught in the Aldan, particularly tymen,* of a very large size. I shot during the morning five large black cocks, and several ducks and teal; so that I was obliged to give away some of my game at this station, having more than we could use, and in return got some excellent fish, milk, butter, &c. There is a house here, and several Yakut jourtas.

The weather setting in to rain heavily just after our arrival, we were obliged to remain until the morning of the 9th, when we made a quick journey past the Amgaskoy lakes to the next station, called Mildagaia. The country, after passing the Aldan, wore a different aspect from that we left behind us. There were fewer mountains, and these were so low they rather deserved the name of hills; but we met with forests of the yellow pine of a good growth, intermixed with birch, ash, and poplars,—large bodies of rich low grounds, lakes, springs, and meadows.† We saw occasionally dwellings of

* A large white fish, very voracious, and the flesh of which is coarse.

† We saw but two rivulets, and those but very insignificant ones, from the time we left the Amga until our arrival at Yakutsk, the intermediate country being beautified and watered by innumerable lakes.

Yakuts, cattle and horses feeding, men cutting and making hay, and sufficient indication of industry and population to relieve the mind from the painful idea that such a fine country should be destitute of inhabitants. We got that evening to another station, where there were three jourtas, situated near a small lake, which, as usual, was covered with water-fowl.

Early in the forenoon of the following day (the 10th), riding a distance of twenty-six versts, we came to Arrahloch, another post-station. On my arrival there, the three Yakuts said one of their jourtas was only half a day's journey off, and solicited me strongly to leave the road and pay them a visit, that they might have an opportunity to entertain me, and repay me, in some measure, for my kindness to them, as well as to procure fresh horses, so as to relieve those that carried the baggage. I complied with their request, they being very good people, who had served me faithfully; and as it would likewise give me an opportunity of examining more minutely their jourtas and mode of living.

We got to their summer dwelling early in the afternoon. It was a very large jourta, built after the same manner I have described as customary among the Reindeer Karaikees, except

that it was much higher and larger, and covered with birch-bark instead of reindeer-skins; being altogether a very cool and pleasant summer residence. They showed me their winter jourta, situated at the foot of a hill, and built after the manner of a house—a large, substantial, comfortable dwelling, having under the same roof several apartments, to accommadate some of their cows and horses during the winter. The building was composed of hewed logs put firmly together, the roof and sides being well covered with turf, and plastered with cow dung. It had few windows, and those very small, having shutters that fitted in tight, like the dead-lights of a ship; and these were absolutely necessary to keep out the frost, which, in the province of Yakutsk, the coldest part of all Siberia, sometimes stands at forty-four degrees of Reaumur.* In the centre of each apartment is an uncouth fire-place, composed of wood plastered over with mud; but which I observed was built quite on the

* The inhabitants sometimes cut large blocks of ice, the size of the window-frames, which they put in and let them freeze fast. These serve them the winter through; and though rather opaque sort of lights, are perfectly tight and warm, and remain until thawed out by the heat of spring.

Rumford principle, the back inclining forward, and the flue of the chimney being extremely small.

On my return I seated myself by the baggage, in front of my tent, which I preferred inhabiting owing to the fear of getting some more of the unpleasant companions I had now got rid of, and which were formerly so troublesome to me. I had been there but a few minutes, when the Yakut and his family appeared before me, presenting me with a quantity of sour milk, fresh milk, butter and cream, together with a young bullock between two and three years old, that was knocked down, and his throat cut, ere I had time to prevent it. It was therefore necessary to receive this large present, though I hardly knew what to do with it. However, I insisted upon their receiving some of my game in return, to which I added tea, sugar, tobacco, flour, with beads and other trinkets for the women; and those kind people were so much pleased, that they thanked me a thousand times. They lead quite a pastoral life, and, living in a country full of fine meadows, where there is an abundance of grass, turn their whole attention to the rearing of horned cattle and horses. Milk prepared in various ways is their principal sus-

tenance; and their favourite beverage, as I have already mentioned, is khoomiss, an intoxicating, acidulated liquor, when old. The best is made of mare's milk, and of it they are extravagantly fond. I was curious to examine the large birch-bark tub, containing the *mother* on which this fermentation is produced, and being always esteemed in proportion to its age, preserved with the nicest care, and oftentimes handed down as a legacy from father to son! They seem to understand very little of the economy of a dairy, making no cheese, and but bad butter; the latter being sour cream either kept until it grows hard, and the whey then drained off, or melted over the fire, and poured out clear into birch vessels, called *tougty*, where it becomes hard, and will keep a considerable length of time in such a cold climate. Their white butter, made by the first-mentioned process, is quite sour as well as strong; while that which is boiled becomes yellow, and were it not for the oily and smoky flavour it acquires by their careless manner of making it, would be very excellent. I tasted afterwards butter of this description at Yakutsk, and found it perfectly good, though my host informed me it had been made the previous season. Some that I made

my servant melt in this way, carefully covered, proved very palatable. They have a custom also of drying clotted or scalded cream in cakes —one of the delicacies presented to me that really deserves the name: some of it, however, was smoky, I suppose for want of attention.

As the country inhabited by these people has a vast number of lakes, they never want for fish and water-fowl, except in the depth of winter. I saw neither pigs, sheep, nor poultry amongst them; nor, in fact, any other domestic animals except those mentioned before; though I have heard that some of them have goats.

Leaving our Yakut friends' habitation, on the 11th in the morning, we travelled over immense tracts of meadows, and passed a great many lakes, five of which were beautifully situated, and all surrounded by meadows more or less extensive.* We got about two o'clock in the after-

* The Yakut names of the principal ones are Kharradah, Kharbatchi, Khallingattah, Maionnah and Moondrah. A vast number of the Yakut names end in *loch* and *lach*, and they pronounce them with a rough guttural sound, as the same terminations in Irish and Scotch are commonly spoken by the vulgar of those countries. Though I could not discover any actual rememblance in other words, I found the strongest, in sound, to the common Irish language, as spoken in the southern parts of Ireland.

noon on the main road again, to a post-station consisting of four jourtas and a magazine, situated on the border of a large lake, called Cherropchee. During our morning's ride I stopped to see the Yakuts mow grass, which they performed as a man might cut wood in other countries, swinging a short dull scythe above their heads, and literally hewing it down by main strength. Mowing is, properly, a work done by sleight, as well as by strength, with a long sharp scythe, that enables an expert hand to lay down a couple of acres of grass in a day: and this should be explained to them. I observed their hay was drawn home by oxen, yoked to sledges, nearly after the European manner. Their horned cattle, in general, though not remarkably tall, are large, strong, and well proportioned; but the cows do not give a great deal of milk. The cattle here were larger and better than immediately in the neighbourhood of Yakutsk.

After passing the station a few versts, we again met with several lakes, and one very large, called Quoullah, where, observing some Yakuts fishing, we purchased of them as much fish as we wanted, for a small quantity of tobacco. They seemed of the roach and tench kind, ex-

cept one small sort of shining fish, with silvery grey scales, and about three or four inches long, which my Chinese were overjoyed to behold in such large quantities, that fish being in their country considered a great delicacy. In China they are called *tchak-eue* are held in great estimation as a cooling, simple food, proper to be given to sick people, or to children in the small-pox, and not less esteemed by the epicures, who greedily seek after them. The bellies have a slight bitterish taste, from some aquatic herb the fish feed on, which herb however is so delicate that they are always cooked with their inside retained.

At night we encamped near the lake Khood-lugge, where we also procured fish in plenty. I observed one of the Yakuts take up a canoe, with great seeming ease, carry it a considerable distance on his shoulders, and then place it in the water. I went to examine of what materials it was composed, that could be light enough to enable him to transport it so easily. It was about twelve feet long, proportionally wide, lessening gradually, from the centre, and sharp at each end, flat bottomed, and made of birch-bark, ingeniously sewed together. It was ribbed

with pieces of thin birch-wood, and would carry two or three men with great safety. This sort of canoe is stronger than one would imagine from the materials of which it is composed, swims in very shallow water, and may be impelled by a simple paddle against the swiftest currents.

The morning of the 12th of August was quite cold, with a hoar frost; yet the day proved hotter than any we had yet experienced. Indeed the heat increased diurnally the moment we had passed Baley Raka, and had got out of the influence of that immense body of mountains covering the surface between that spot and Allachkune. The weather was so oppressive about one o'clock, that I stopped near the lake and station called Borrodoy, to refresh ourselves and our horses. About this place the meadows appeared parched, and suffering for want of rain.

At three o'clock we pursued our journey, passing a station and a lake called Tchatcheekui, and, a few versts farther, one of the largest lakes we had yet seen, of a circular form, on the banks of which were encamped a company of soldiers, belonging to the battalion that had been ordered out of Kamtschatka, and was returning to Yakutsk. I pitched my tent some versts

farther on, near the lake Noroggannah,* and shot several black game and water-fowl, the latter covering the surface of the water in innumerable flocks. In fact all the lakes we met with, and which were too numerous to name, literally swarmed with water-fowl. I observed the natives employed the same method of ensnaring them which I have already described, namely by nooses of horse-hair, placed in the openings of small ozier fences, stuck across many of the shallow parts of the lake, where the weeds grow thick, and where the birds resort to feed.

The 13th of August was another very hot

* In the autumn of 1826 we passed over the same places with much difficulty through sleet and snow; and the roads were in many places so slippery, the horses could hardly keep on their legs. The reader will readily imagine what must have been my feelings at the situation of a *female* on horseback making such a journey. I had a daughter of eight years of age, and my Cossack had another about the same age. They were placed in boxes with tops to them (called in Siberia kibitkas), and tied at each side of the horse, which was led by the Cossack,—and performed the journey without accident. This however may be fairly ascribed to the goodness of the horses, which are without exception the surest-footed animals I ever saw. When we consider the danger of passing the deep and rapid fords, it is truly surprising that they never fell with us into the water.

day. We passed over a fine country, adorned with a number of larger and more beautiful lakes than before, besides superb forests, meadows, &c. and rested about one o'clock at the lake and station called Tongoolee. In the afternoon's journey we again saw a number of lakes, and passed two lakes and stations, known by the name of Tolghiaktak and Burrynnaktak,—encamping at night some distance beyond them, near the beautiful lake Alasskuil. The lakes were in such numbers, I was sure of finding one at every few versts; therefore we never passed the night on a spot that was not perfectly what we wished in point of convenience as well as appearance: the endless variety prevailing in that enchanting country left us at liberty to choose according to our judgment or caprice. If the winter were not so severe, the region might be styled, with truth, a perfect Arcadia, where the pastoral life exists in its native purity, and where picturesque and romantic beauties would court the pen of the poet and pencil of the painter.

As we were now only five-and-twenty versts from Yakutsk, I determined to proceed slowly the following day, our horses suffering greatly from the heat, and some of them having come

all the way from Ochotsk with us. The one I rode was the most indefatigable animal I ever saw, having carried me upwards of a thousand versts, and being almost as fresh at the end of the journey as the day he set out. These horses procured their food themselves by the road side where we stopped; and they are certainly the strongest and hardiest beasts in the world. It frequently happened that they were allowed to feed only at night,—travelling from sunrise to sunset, at a very steady pace, without eating.

On the 14th of August we set out for Yakutsk, and passed several large lakes adorned with islands, and more beautifully diversified than any of the previous ones. By noon we ascended a steep hill, overlooking an immense plain that bounded the right bank of the Lena, and apparently consisting of excellent meadow-grounds, the greater part of which are overflowed at the swelling of the waters of the rivers in the spring. On this verdant and extensive plain, skirted by a ridge of hills covered with forests on the one side, and the superb river Lena on the other, we beheld houses, jourtas, hay-stacks, hay-makers, herds of cattle and horses, &c. It was a prospect extremely rich and interesting, and convinced me, that what I had heard of the

country about the town of Yakutsk was not in the least exaggerated. After travelling three or four versts we came to a small village, principally inhabited by Yakuts, called Yarmanka, or the Fair, as it is the spot where the merchants who go to Ochotsk assemble in the spring, previously to their departure. It is about two versts from the river, which is here upwards of twelve versts wide, in a straight direction from bank to bank; but in crossing we must have made more than twenty versts, owing to the waters being low, and many of the sand banks entirely bare. We therefore were frequently obliged to descend one branch and mount the next, against the current; so that we had a very tedious time ere we reached the other side; and then, having two versts to walk, it was between five and six in the evening before we got to the town of Yakutsk.

END OF VOL. I.

J. B. NICHOLS AND SON,
25, PARLIAMENT-STREET.

INTERESTING TRAVELS,

JUST PUBLISHED BY

HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,

NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

I.

TRAVELS TO TIMBUCTOO, through Central Africa, and across the Great Desert to Morocco: performed in the Years 1824—1828. By RENE CAILLIE. In 2 vols. 8vo. illustrated with Views of the City of Timbuctoo and its Buildings, a Map of the Route, a Portrait of the Author, &c. &c.

II.

RECORDS OF CAPT. CLAPPERTON'S LAST EXPEDITION TO AFRICA. By RICHARD LANDER, his faithful Attendant, and the only surviving Member of the Expedition; with the subsequent Adventures of the Author. In 2 vols. post 8vo. with a fine Portrait by Dean, and numerous Illustrations.

III.

FOUR YEARS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

By COWPER ROSE, Royal Engineers. In 8vo. 10s. 6d.

"An agreeable mixture of vivid landscape and spirited portraiture."—*Literary Gazette.*

IV.

TRAVELS IN THE EAST. By JOHN CARNE, Esq. Author of "Letters from the East." Printed uniformly with, and in continuation of, that work. In 1 vol. post 8vo. 10s. 6d.

"Mr. Carne, whose work, entitled 'Letters from the East,' is in every one's hands, and has been considered as a topographical guide through the Scriptures, has published a volume of 'Recollections' connected with the Holy Land, Syria, and Egypt, which abounds in curious illustrations of biblical localities and events."—*Evening Paper.*

V.

TRAVELS IN CHALDÆA. Including a Journey from Bussorah to Bagdad, Hillah, and Babylon, performed on foot in the Year 1827; with Observations on the Sites and Remains of Babel, Seleucia, and Ctesiphon. By CAPTAIN MIGNAN, of the Hon. East India Company's Service. In one vol. 8vo. with 25 Illustrations. 14s.

"An indispensable addition to the libraries of those who take an interest in Biblical criticism, in Oriental antiquities, and in the most curious portion of the history of human nature."—*Morning Chronicle.*

MAR 2 8 1936

MAR 2 6 1936